MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

THE MIGHTY THOR®

VOLUME 16

THE MIGHTY THOR Nos. 255-266
& ANNUAL No. 6
LEN WEIN, JOHN BUSCEMA & WALTER SIMONSON

MARVEL

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PRESENTS

THE MIGHTY THOR

VOLUME 16

COLLECTING

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& ANNUAL No. 6

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OVER THE RAINBOW BRIDGE
BY WALTER SIMONSON

I started college in the fall of 1964. By the end of that school year the following May, I had read my first issue of *Journey Into Mystery* and discovered both the adventures of Thor, son of Odin, and the existence of Marvel Comics.

It was a brief affair, only one issue long. I was visiting the dorm of a couple of my freshmen friends, and lying around their room somewhere was a copy of *Journey Into Mystery* #113. I'd never heard of Marvel Comics before and it was something of a revelation. I'd read comics as a kid, but this was like nothing I'd seen. It was rough-hewn, vital, full of piss and vinegar, and written in the same over-the-top way. And, most importantly, it was vastly entertaining.

The issue contained the Grey Gargoyle's second appearance in the title as he tried to defeat the Mighty Thor. It was a single-issue story, made up of equal parts drama and soap opera. Thor revealed his immortal identity to Jane Foster; Odin was angry with his son for doing so; the All-Father stripped Thor of his power; the Grey Gargoyle was furiously trying to locate Thor by threatening a crippled doctor and his nurse; and a mysterious messenger sent from Asgard arrived on Earth on a secret mission, among other things. All of this was crammed into 16 pages. I hasten to add that I have not gone back and reviewed the issue in question. I had a young brain then that soaked up the stuff I was interested in. I wasn't doing fabulously in calculus or physics (I was passing), but Norse myths? I was on it! And I was wowed by this comic book.

However, that was the only *Journey Into Mystery/Thor* comic book I was to see for some months. There were no other issues lying around the dorm room, and although I loved it, I had no idea what I was looking at as far as Marvel Comics or Stan Lee or Jack Kirby were concerned. It might as well have been a document flown in from Mars.

It wasn't until I was home that summer on vacation that I stumbled across a pair of *Journey Into Mystery* issues (#120-121) in a drugstore some miles from my home. They hadn't removed the previous issue when the new one came out as they should have, so both issues were on the rack at the same time. And they turned out to be the beginning of a four-issue story arc involving Loki and the Absorbing Man in a plot to overthrow Odin's rule.

I was hooked. I was already familiar with Norse mythology from a book that my parents had on the bookshelves at home. I loved it, and was blown away to discover a comic book based on the subject. I didn't care that the comic book Thor had blonde hair, no iron gauntlets, and wasn't Balder's half-brother. I was in!

When I went back to college for my sophomore year, I very quickly learned the intricacies of magazine distribution at Augie's Tobacco Shop, the only place in town that carried comic books. There were thousands of college kids around, and I discovered that if I wasn't in the store on Tuesday afternoons at about 4 P.M., the Marvel Comics that arrived that day were gone by Wednesday morning. Within a few months, primed by Thor and *Journey Into Mystery*, I was collecting and following all of Marvel's titles. That wasn't such a big deal at the time. Marvel was publishing around 11 titles a month with a cover price of 12 cents. Even a college kid far from home could afford that! And very quickly, the comic book pile in my door room became a foot high and started to take of a shelf. But *Thor* always remained my favorite Marvel title.

For me, the cream of Stan and Jack's run on *Journey Into Mystery/Thor* began with *JIM* #114 and ran through *Thor* #139. (The series officially changed titles from *Journey Into Mystery* to *Thor* with

issue #126, although the issue numbering remained the same. It was the old days!) Looking back now at that run, I'm still blown away by the number of ideas and stories and characters and soap operas that they were able to cram into about 25 issues. The Absorbing Man, the Trial of the Gods, the first Destroyer story, Loki's attempt to overthrow Odin, the introduction of Hercules and the Greek gods, Thor's descent into the Netherworld, Tana Nile and the Colonizers of Rigel, Ego the Living Planet, the fate of Jane Foster, the introduction of the goddess Sif, and the Troll war. Stan and Jack packed as much stuff into every issue as they had in the first issue I'd read in my friend's dorm room. As a reader, I was enthralled.

I liked the comics so much that within a few months of my discovery of Marvel Comics, I was doing drawings of a number of their characters, good guys and bad guys. I drew them mostly as full-figure vignettes against a white background with their names behind them as logos. Those drawings were done with felt tips and colored pencils on typewriter paper. I knew nothing about the actual production of comics back then, and was aware of only a couple of other kids on campus who read Marvels. Essentially, I was on my own to try to figure out how to create my drawings. One of the earliest approaches I had was to try and draw the characters very much as they appeared in the comics. Essentially, I was trying to imitate the styles of the various artists who drew the books because that's how I thought the characters were meant to look. So my Iron Man drawing was modeled after Gene Colan as inked by Jack Abel. My Spider-Man had a Ditko flavor to it. And my Thor partook from Kirby and Colletta. Most of those color drawings have long since disappeared, and the only one that remains is a drawing of the Destroyer with a logo behind it. I liked letterforms even then and all the color drawings had the characters' logos behind him. For those characters (mostly bad guys) who had no logos, I invented my own. I had no idea at the time that such practice at drawing and lettering would be of practical value to me in a few years.

The most elaborate piece I attempted after I'd begun reading *Journey Into Mystery* was a large drawing of Thor I did in India ink. It was probably inked with technical pens/Rapidographs as I had not yet discovered crow quill pen points. In imitation of the Kirby/Colletta Thor, I did a lot of very fine line rendering without quite grasping the underlying structure of Jack's wonderful drawing. Nevertheless, I was clearly trying for something more ambitious than most of the drawings I had done up to that time. It's the only large-scale drawing I did, nearly two feet high, done on good drawing paper at more than double the size of my smaller color drawings.

After college, I was still reading comic books. I decided to go to art school, and, while I was there, I began to think seriously about trying to get a job in the comics industry.

I moved to New York City and began working in comics professionally in 1972. Then, in 1977, my friend, Len Wein, who was both the editor and writer of *The Mighty Thor*, asked me if I would be interested taking on drawing the pencil layouts on the title, which Tony DeZuniga would do finishes over. John Buscema had been doing the layouts and was leaving the book. He was an impossible act to follow, of course, but I was young and full of hubris. And I jumped at the chance to draw Thor for the first time professionally.

I stepped right into an epic story that Len had been working on with John dealing with a missing Odin. Consequently, I got to draw the layouts for the conclusion of the epic, trying to think as big as I possibly could. When that storyline was finished, Len and I jumped around a bit, first back to Asgard for another round of Loki trying to upset Odin's apple cart, and then to Earth where Thor dealt with more earthbound menaces. Len and I had a lot of fun playing with the toys. We were inspired by the Lee/Kirby work, using a lot of the tropes that they had established in the 1960s. We got to do Loki, the Destroyer, Odin, Sif, the Warriors Three, and even the Recorder from the earlier days in the *Thor* run. And we introduced some new characters as well.

Len and I would talk about the plots but back in the day, it was all pretty loose. I can't remember now if Len actually gave me written plots or if we just hashed them out. We were working in what was then called "Marvel-style" to create the stories. That meant that Len would write the plot for each issue (with me kibitzing a little here and there) and then turn the plot over to me to lay out. That gave me a lot of room to maneuver, and presented a great opportunity to work on my visual storytelling without having to labor over the rendering of the finished drawings from panel to panel. My only regret now is that Tony is no longer around for me to thank. I didn't fully appreciate his finishes at the time, but I wouldn't mind telling him now that he did a fine job making me look good! So did Joe Sinnott and Ernie Chan on the work they did inking over my layouts on issue #261 and #265.

When I first began working on the book, I harkened back to the approach I took to those early college drawings of Marvel characters. I didn't want the shift from John's layouts to my layouts to be too jarring for readers. Consequently, I tried doing layouts more or less in John's manner, a style imitation if you will. I couldn't match his unparalleled draftsmanship of course, but I was able to tackle composition and breakdowns to some extent to keep it reasonably close under Tony's finishes. And I'd like to think that readers were swept along by the story without feeling a jolt because of the shift in artists.

Working on *Thor* with Len for a year was great fun. It also had an unexpected consequence. Drawing those issues meant I had a year on *Thor* where I was trying to do full-on Kirby. I wasn't trying to imitate Kirby's figure work or compositions, but I was trying to be inspired by the size of his vision in general, such as his version of the city of Asgard, full of towers and ramps and statuary with its science fiction feel. The consequence was that when I began to write and draw the title myself, some five years later, I felt I had already done "Kirby" on the title. In a sense, my time on the stories you now hold in your hands granted me the freedom to tackle Marvel's Asgardian gods in my own way later on. I was still in awe of and inspired by Jack's work, of course, but I was able to try to unfetter my own vision of Marvel's Norse gods with a freedom I might not otherwise have felt had I not done this run with Len. And I'll always be grateful to him for that opportunity. For me, this is where that all began.

We hope you enjoy reading the stories contained herein. We enjoyed creating them.

BOTTOM-LEFT AND FACING PAGE: Walter Simonson's college illustrations of the Destroyer and Thor, dated 8/24/66 and 11/6/66.

THOR

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LO, THE QUEST DOTH BEGIN!

THE MIGHTY

THOR®

NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN DEFY THE POWER OF OUR *GRAVITY-RAY*, ASGARDIAN !

A MOMENT LONGER--AND YOU WILL BE *DRAGGED BENEATH THE EARTH FOREVER!!*

THEY'RE BACK!

The STONE MEN from SATURN!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN: WRITER/EDITOR * TONY DeZUNIGA: ILLUSTRATOR * GLYNIS WEIN: COLORIST * WATANABE LETTERER

LO, THE QUEST BEGINS!

FORGIVE ME, MY FRIENDS--BUT I HAVE FAILED IN MY GIVEN MISSION!

THE RUBY EYE OF THE DRAGON HATH BEEN DESTROYED!

HIS TONE IS SOLEMN, HIS FACE IS GRIM, AND THE BITTER WORDS STICK IN HIS THROAT LIKE JAGGED THORNS--

--FOR THE RUEFUL THUNDER GOD KNOWS FULL WELL THAT THOSE WORDS MAY SPELL THE END OF A NOBLE EMPIRE!

BUT, MILORD THOR, SURELY THERE MUST BE SOME **EXPLANATION--!**

WHAT DO EXPLANATIONS MATTER **NOW,** LADY SIF?

THE ALL-WISE **MIMIR** SENT ME FORTH TO **RETRIEVE** THE RUBY EYE FOR HIM, AND I HAVE RETURNED **EMPTY-HANDED!**

WHAT **MORE** IS THERE TO **SAY?**

I BEG THEE, BELOVED--DO NOT **CONDEMN** THYSELF SO.

AND WHY **NOT,** PRAY TELL? 'TIS **I** WHO AM AT **FAULT** HERE--AND I **ALONE!**

FOR 'TWAS I WHO **SACRIFICED** THE ACCURSED GEM TO **SAVE** THE SAVAGE TROLL EMPIRE FROM THE MONSTROUS **TROGG!***

*IN **THOR** #253, IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE **GOLDILOCKS.** --LEN.

FOR THE SAKE OF OUR MOST BITTER **ENEMIES,** I ABANDONED THE **REALM ETERNAL** TO WHATEVER FATE MAY BEFALL IT--

--FOR, WITHOUT THE RUBY EYE TO OFFER UP AS **TRIBUTE,** MIMIR SHALL NOT TELL US WHERE TO **FIND** THE LONG-MISSING **ODIN!**

THEN PERHAPS THERE IS **ANOTHER** WAY TO LEARN WHAT WE MUST KNOW, MY LOVE.

PLEASE, THOU MUST NOT **PUNISH** THYSELF SO FOR PERFORMING SO VERY **NOBLE** AN ACT!

AYE, MILORD--THOU MUST **LISTEN** TO THY LADY!

VALIANT **VOLSTAGG** WOULD HAVE DONE THE **SAME,** FRIEND THOR, HAD I BEEN IN THY **PLACE!**

AS WOULD WE **ALL,** MY PRINCE!

PERHAPS, BRAVE BALDER--BUT NONE OF **YE** ARE THE ALL-FATHER'S **SON!**

NOW STOKE THY MYSTIC **FIRES,** AGED VIZIER--AND SUMMON FORTH THE FIERY FACE OF **MIMIR.**

THE SWIFTER I BE **DONE** WITH ALL THIS, THE **BETTER!**

AYE, LORD THOR--THOUGH MY SORROW BE NEARLY THE **EQUAL** OF THINE OWN--I SHALL **DO** AS THOU **COMMANDEST!**

THUS, HIS WIZENED HANDS **TREMBLING,** THE SOMBER VIZIER CONJURES FORTH FORCES THAT WERE **ANCIENT** BEFORE THE BIRTH OF **TIME**--

--AND THE ASSEMBLED ASGARDIANS STARE DEEP INTO THE FLICKERING **FIRE-PIT**--

--AS THE AWESOME, ANGRY IMAGE OF THE ALL-WISE MIMIR **MATERIALIZES** BEFORE THEM!

GREETINGS, ODINSON-- I HAVE BEEN **EXPECTING** THY SUMMONS!

BUT I FEAR I HAVE **BAD TIDINGS** FOR THEE, FIERY ONE.

THOU DOST POSSESS THE **RUBY EYE** NO LONGER! AYE, THUNDER GOD... **I KNOW!**

THERE IS NAUGHT THAT MAY BE KEPT **SECRET** FROM HE WHO IS THE FOUNT OF ALL **KNOWLEDGE!**

I OFFER NO **EXCUSES,** MIMIR-- ONLY PROFOUND **REGRETS.**

NO EXCUSES ARE **NECESSARY,** CHILD--FOR THOU DIDST PRECISELY WHAT WAS **EXPECTED** OF THEE!

MIMIR IS NOT **VAIN,** YOUNG THOR--I REQUIRE NO **TRIBUTE** PAID ME.

WHAT THOU DIDST ENDURE WAS MERELY A TEST OF THY **WORTHI-NESS** TO LEARN WHAT THOU HADST ASKED...

...AND THOU DIDST **PASS** THE TEST WITH **HONOR!**

THUS, LOOK THEE INTO MY **FLAMES,** THUNDER GOD-- AND THE **ANSWER** THOU DOST SEEK SHALL BE **THINE!**

LOOK DEEP AND BEHOLD-- THE **DOOMSDAY STAR!**

WHERE SHINES THE DOOMSDAY STAR, THE NIGHT IS **BLACK** BEYOND REDEMPTION! IT CASTS ITS GRIM **SHADOW** ACROSS WORLDS WITHOUT NUMBER, BLOTTING OUT ALL HOPE OF THE **DAWN!**

IF THOU DOST WISH TO **FIND** THY MISSING **FATHER,** ODINSON--SEEK HIM **THERE**... SEEK HIM **THERE**...

BUT WHERE IS THIS DREADFUL STAR **LOCATED,** MIMIR? HOW SHALL I FIND...**EH?**

HEIMDALL'S EYES! THE WISE ONE HATH **FLED**-- BACK TO GUARD THE DARK WELL OF **WISDOM** ONCE MORE!

NO OTHER ANSWERS WILL BE **FORTHCOMING** THIS DAY--BUT I HAVE LEARNED **ENOUGH!**

BY THINE OWN ETERNAL **FLAME**, MIMIR, I **SWEAR** TO THEE--

--I SHALL **FIND** THE NOBLE ODIN AND **RETURN** HIM TO THE GOLDEN THRONE OF MIGHTY ASGARD--

--OR I SHALL **PERISH** IN THE TRYING!!

AND IF THOU WOULDST **HAVE** US, MILORD--WE WARRIORS THREE WOULD BE **PROUD** TO STAND AT THY **SIDE**.

'TIS TOO GREAT A **TASK** BEFORE THEE FOR EVEN **THOR** TO FACE **ALONE!**

THINE ARGUMENT HATH **MERIT**, GRIM HOGUN.

THEN THOU SHALT TAKE US **WITH** THEE, BELOVED?

AYE, MILADY SIF. 'TWAS **ALONE** THAT I DID **LOSE** THE RUBY EYE --AND THUS ALMOST **CONDEMNED** THE REALM ETERNAL!

THY COMPANY IS MOST **WELCOME** INDEED, MY FRIENDS!

THEN WE COMMEND OURSELVES TO THY **SERVICE**, FRIEND THOR-- **UNTO DEATH, AND BEYOND!**

FOR ODIN!

FOR ASGARD!!

AND NE'ER HATH THE GOLDEN REALM BEEN SERVED MORE **NOBLY** THAN BY **THEE**, MY LOYAL COMRADES!

AMEN TO **THAT**, GOOD THUNDER GOD... **AMEN TO THAT!**

THOUGH FANDRAL, HOGUN, AND VOLSTAGG ARE FAR ***FLEETER*** OF TONGUE THAN I, MILORD--I ***TOO*** BEG THY LEAVE TO ***ACCOMPANY*** THEE..

IF THERE ARE ***BATTLES*** TO BE FOUGHT TO ***RESCUE*** ALMIGHTY ODIN, BALDER WOULD BE IN THE ***THICK*** OF THEM!

AND KARNILLA WONDERS ***WHY,*** BRAVE ONE? THY PLACE IS ***HERE!***

THE NORN QUEEN SPEAKETH ***A'RIGHT,*** MY FRIEND. A FAR MORE ***IMPORTANT*** TASK AWAITS THEE THAN THE CLARION CALL TO ***BATTLE--***

--FOR I CHARGE THEE, BALDER, TO ***GUARD*** THE THRONE OF ASGARD WELL UNTIL THE ALL-FATHER'S ***RETURN!***

MY DISAPPOINTMENT IS ***GREAT,*** MY PRINCE--BUT THY WISH IS MY ***WILL!***

GO ***SWIFTLY*** THEN, GOOD ASGARDIANS--AND MAY THE FATES ***PROTECT*** THEE!

FEAR ***NOT,*** AGED ONE! WITH THE ***LION OF WARRIORS*** BESIDE THEM, VICTORY IS ***ASSURED!***

WOULDST THAT WE ALL ***SHARED*** THY CONFIDENCE, VOLSTAGG!

NOW ***HURRY***-- TO THE ***COURTYARD!***

THE ***STARJAMMER*** AWAITS US!!

*IN THE SPRAWLING COURTYARD OF THE PALACE ROYAL, A BILLOWING **SAIL** IS CAREFULLY UNFURLED, A HEAVY **TILLER** IS TURNED INTO THE WIND--*

*--AND THE STARTLING **STARJAMMER** TAKES TO THE STAR-DAPPLED **HEAVENS,** SWIFTLY LEAVING THE GLITTERING GOLDEN SPIRES OF FABLED **ASGARD** FAR **BEHIND!***

*THUS DOES THE QUEST **BEGIN**--ABOARD A FRAIL WOODEN VESSEL THAT CAN TRAVEL TO THE VERY **ENDS** OF THE BOUNDLESS **UNIVERSE.***

MINUTES TURN INTO HOURS TURN INTO DAYS, AS THE **STARJAMMER** PLIES THE STELLAR **PATHWAYS**--

--AND EACH OF THOSE **ABOARD** THE SPACECRAFT PASSES THE TIME IN SOME **DIFFERENT** WAY--

--SAVE THAT **ALL** OF THEM UNIFORMLY **IGNORE** THE BOISTEROUS CHATTER OF VOLUMINOUS **VOLSTAGG**--

--UNTIL THE VAST ONE'S STENTORIAN TONES ABRUPTLY GROW **SHRILL,** TINGED WITH **ASTONISHMENT** AND NO SMALL AMOUNT OF **FEAR!**

THERE WERE **TEN** OF THEM, I SAY THEE--THE **FIERCEST** OF ALL THE **STORM GIANTS**--BUT DID I TURN AND **FLEE?**

NAY, MY FRIENDS! FROM MY LOFTY PERCH, I DESCENDED **UPON** THEM AND REDUCED THEM ALL TO... **ZOUNDS!**

WHY HAST THOU GROWN **SILENT,** VAST...

NAY.

BY HELA'S COLD TOUCH! WE ARE **BESIEGED!**

ALL TURN TO **FOLLOW** THE PATH OF VOLSTAGG'S THRUSTING **FINGER**-- AND WHAT THEY **BEHOLD** FAIRLY TURNS THEIR BLOOD TO **ICE!**

'TIS A **METEOR STORM**--

--AND WE ARE SAILING STRAIGHT INTO THE **THICK** OF IT!

QUICKLY, MY FRIENDS-- MAN THE **TILLER!** TRY TO **TURN** US FROM ITS **PATH**--

--WHILST **I** ATTEMPT TO TURN **IT** FROM **OURS!**

THOUGH I BE **MASTER** OF THE STORM AND THE LIGHTNING, NE'ER BEFORE HAVE I FACED A TEMPEST SUCH AS **THIS!**

BUT NOW I MUST PROVE MYSELF **ITS** MASTER AS WELL-- OR **PERISH** WHERE I STAND!

IF ONLY I WERE **FREE** TO LEND THE THUNDER GOD THE POWER OF MY MIGHTY **SINEWS**--!

IF ONLY THOU WOULDST PUT THY MIGHTY **BACKSIDE** INTO THIS TILLER, VAST ONE-- WE MIGHT **ALL** BE SAVED!

THESE STAR-BORN PROJECTILES ARE AS MANY AS **SANDS** ON THE BEACH!

NOT EVEN **I** CAN HOPE TO DESTROY THEM **ALL!**

BUT MAYHAP IF MINE ENCHANTED MALLET **MJOLNIR** CAN CARVE A **COURSE** FOR US THRU THE **CENTER** OF THE STORM--

--WE MIGHT YET BE **SAVED!**

*HEEDLESS--ALMOST **CONTEMPTUOUS**--OF ANY-THING THAT MIGHT LIE IN ITS **PATH.** THE METEOR SWARM **CONTINUOUS** ITS ENDLESS TO **OBLIVION**--*

*--WHILE THE STAR-JAMMER RUNS A PERILOUS **GAUNTLET** STRAIGHT THRU THE SPACE-STORM'S VERY **HEART!***

*REMARKABLY, THE FRAGILE VESSEL **SURVIVES** THE ORDEAL IN ONE PIECE... WELL, **ALMOST** IN ONE PIECE!*

WE CANNOT PRESS **ONWARD** UNTIL THE STARJAMMER'S SAIL HATH BEEN **REPAIRED,** MY FRIENDS.

THEN LET US PUT IN AT YONDER **ASTEROID,** BELOVED.

IT WILL GRANT US A **HAVEN** OF SORTS WHILST WE DO WHATE'ER WE **MUST!**

AND WHEN THE DAMAGED STARJAMMER HAS **DOCKED** ON THE DRIFTING MASS...

'TWILL NOT TAKE **LONG** FOR US TO **MEND** THE DAMAGED... **OD'S BLOOD!**

BEHOLD, MY FRIENDS--THE RUINS OF AN **ALIEN SPACECRAFT!**

IT APPEARS WE ARE NOT THE **FIRST** TO SEEK SHELTER ON THIS DESOLATE CHUNK OF **SPACE DEBRIS!**

ITS **WORKMANSHIP** IS MOST **IMPRESSIVE,** FRIEND THOR.

AYE, DASHING ONE. WHAT SAY WE **INVESTIGATE** THIS PROUD VESSEL?

MAYHAP THERE REMAINS SOME **TRACE** OF THE ALIEN RACE THAT **CONSTRUCTED** IT!

BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES! WHAT MANNER OF **DEVILTRY** IS THIS--?!?

NAY, VOLUMINOUS ONE--THERE IS NO **DEVILTRY** AT WORK HERE, ONLY THE SCULPTING HAND OF AN **ARTISAN!**

THESE SEEM TO BE **STATUES** OF SOME SORT--GRIM **MONUMENTS** TO THE MEMORY OF THOSE WHO LAID DOWN THEIR **LIVES** HERE!

PFAH! WHAT DOES IT MATTER **NOW,** GRIM ONE?

THOSE WHO **PILOTED** YON SPACECRAFT ARE GONE AND LONG **FORGOTTEN**--AND THESE DUST-CAKED **MONOLITHS** CAN TELL US NAUGHT OF **VALUE!**

FOR ONCE, VOLSTAGG--I FEAR THAT I **AGREE** WITH THEE!

THUS LET US RETURN TO THE **STARJAMMER,** GOOD COMRADES--FOR THERE IS STILL **WORK** TO BE DONE!

BUT IF ALL WHO CRASHED HERE **PERISHED,** THUNDER GOD--THEN **WHO,** PRAY TELL, REMAINED TO **CARVE** THOSE TOWERING MONSTROSITIES?

THE **BOLD** ASGARDIANS **STRIDE AWAY** TO ATTEND TO THE TASK AT HAND--

--AND THUS, THEY DO NOT **NOTICE** AS ONE OF THE TOWERING FORMS BEHIND THEM SHUDDERS **FREE** OF ITS SMOTHERING SHROUD OF **DUST**--

--AND REACHES FOR THE **WEAPON** HOLSTERED SNUGLY AT ITS SIDE!

IN MERE MOMENTS, THE FIVE REMAINING DUST-ENCRUSTED FIGURES HAVE **LIKEWISE** BEEN RELEASED--

--AND A COMPANY OF INTERGALACTIC KILLERS IS **COMPLETE** ONCE MORE!

IT REQUIRES SEVERAL SECONDS **LONGER** FOR THEIR OTHER-WORLDLY SENSES TO SHAKE OFF THE STULTIFYING EFFECTS OF **SUSPENDED ANIMATION** AND BECOME ACCUSTOMED TO **CONSCIOUSNESS** AGAIN--

--BUT WHEN, AT LAST, THEY **HAVE**...

BEHOLD, MY BROTHERS-- THE GODS HAVE FINALLY **ANSWERED** OUR SILENT **PRAYERS!**

THEY HAVE DELIVERED A STURDY **SHIP** INTO OUR WAITING HANDS--

--A MEANS FOR US TO **ESCAPE** THIS STAR-FORSAKEN PLANETOID!

IT MUST BE **OURS**, BROTHERS-- AND WE WILL **SLAY** ANYONE WHO DARES TRY TO KEEP IT **FROM** US!

WITH REMARKABLE **STEALTH** FOR CREATURES SO HUGE, THE ROUGH-HEWN ALIENS STALK EVER **NEARER** THE STATIONARY STARJAMMER, UNTIL...

BY ODIN!!

THE ALIEN STATUES DOTH **LIVE**--FOR THEY ARE NOT **STATUES** AT ALL!

IMPOSSIBLE THOUGH IT DOTH SEEM, THEY ARE IN TRUTH--**THE STONE MEN FROM SATURN!***

*FIRST, LAST, AND ONLY SEEN IN **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY** #83. THOR'S VERY FIRST APPEARANCE--LEN.

WHAT AN AWESOME COSMIC **JEST!** BEFORE US STANDS **THOR,** HE WHO IS **RESPONSIBLE** FOR OUR PLIGHT!

HOLD, STONE MEN! WHAT ART THOU **DOING** HERE? WHAT IS IT THOU DOST **WANT?**

WE WANT YOUR **STARSHIP,** LITTLE ONE--AND WE INTEND TO **HAVE** IT!

STEP ASIDE--AND WE MIGHT LET YOU **LIVE!** DEFY US--AND YOU MOST CERTAINLY WILL **DIE!!**

NAY, GRIM ALIENS! THE STARJAMMER DOTH BE OUR SOLE **HOPE** OF FINDING OUR LONG-MISSING **LIEGE!**

IT IS NOT **MEANT** FOR SUCH AS **THEE!**

NOW STAND YE **BACK**--OR THOU SHALT FACE THE FURY OF **THOR!**

DESPITE MY **WARNING,** THOU DOST STILL MOVE TO **ATTACK** ME?

THEN FEEL THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC MALLET **MJOLNIR**--

THRAAK!

--AND KNOW YE THAT THE **GOD OF THUNDER** DOTH NOT MAKE **IDLE THREATS!**

ONCE BEFORE HAVE I **FACED** THEE-- ON THAT WONDROUS DAY WHEN THE SEEMINGLY-MORTAL DR. **DON BLAKE** DISCOVERED A GNARLED **WALKING STICK,** AND RETURNED TO ME MY **BIRTHRIGHT!**

THEN, AS NOW, THOU DIDST SEEK TO **CONQUER** ALL THAT STOOD IN THY PATH--

CHOOM!

--AND **NOW,** AS THEN, THOU SHALT **FAIL** TO ACHIEVE THY **GOAL!**

TROK!

YOU BATTLE **WELL,** THUNDER GOD--BUT EVEN **YOU** CANNOT HOPE TO PREVAIL AGAINST **ALL** OF US BY **YOURSELF!**

BUT THE NOBLE THOR DOTH NOT BATTLE THEE **ALONE,** STONY ONE!

HIS **BROTHERS-AT-ARMS** DOTH STAND EVER AT HIS **SIDE--**

--UNTO THE VERY **END!**

VERILY, THY CAUSE IS **LOST,** STONE MEN!

SURRENDER **NOW**-- WHILST STILL THOU **CANST!**

IT IS **YOU** WHO WILL BE **LOST,** HUMANOID--WHEN MY **ASTRO-BLASTER** HAS TURNED YOU INTO **DUST!**

THEN THE' **LADY SIF** SHALL SEE TO IT THY HEINOUS WEAPON IS NEVER **FIRED,** MONSTER!

HUHNN?!?

SKRAK!

THE BATTLE IS NOW **EVENLY MATCHED**, ALIENS--**ONE-TO-ONE!**

THOU HAST NO HOPE OF **WINNING!**

YOUR CALCULATIONS ARE **WRONG**, GOLDEN-HAIR! THERE IS NOBODY TO ACCOUNT FOR **ME**--

--AND THAT LITTLE ERROR SHALL BE THE **DEATH** OF YOU!

THOU DOST **DARE** CALL THE EAGLE OF ASGARD **NOBODY**, ROUGH-HEWN ONE?

THEN, VERILY, THOU DOST **DESERVE** THE FATE WHICH NOW DESCENDS **UPON** THEE!

BWHOMP!

NOW, ONCE AGAIN, I CALL UPON THEE TO **SURRENDER**, STONE MEN!

THINK **WELL** ON IT ERE THOU DOST **ANSWER**--

--FOR I SWEAR I SHALL NOT ASK THEE A **THIRD** TIME!

NO! IT CANNOT **END** LIKE THIS! THE THUNDER GOD CANNOT DEFEAT US **AGAIN!**

IT IS **HIS** FAULT WE WERE **STRANDED** HERE IN THE **FIRST** PLACE!

FOR, IN FLEEING **EARTH** AFTER OUR ABORTIVE ATTEMPT TO **CONQUER** IT, OUR SHIP'S ENGINES SOMEHOW **MALFUNCTIONED**--

--AND WE **CRASHED** UPON THIS DESOLATE ROCK!

OUR RADIO WAS **DAMAGED** BEYOND REPAIR, AND THUS, WITH NO HOPE OF **RESCUE**--

--WE PLACED OURSELVES IN **SUSPENDED ANIMATION** UNTIL SUCH TIME AS WE MIGHT BE **DISCOVERED** BY SOME PASSING SHIP--

--AND NOW, AT LAST, THAT DAY HAS **COME!**

THE *IRONY* OF IT ALL IS *ASTONISHING!*

THE FATES HAVE SENT US OUR GREATEST *ENEMY* AS THE WAY TO OUR *SALVATION*--

--AND I SWEAR HE IS GOING TO *PAY* FOR THE MANY MONTHS OF *SUFFERING* WE HAVE BEEN FORCED TO *ENDURE!*

THIS *GRAVITRON* IS OF NO FUTHER VALUE AS THE MEANS OF *POWERING* OUR DEVASTATED CRAFT--

WRAAKK

BUT IT WILL PERFORM A A FAR MORE *PRECIOUS* SERVICE AS THE MEANS OF OUR ULTIMATE *VENGEANCE!*

MAKESHIFT WEAPON IN HAND, THE STONE MAN *RACES* FROM THE RUINED STARSHIP--WHILE, BEHIND HIM, A SEVERED *CABLE* IN THAT VESSEL *SPARKS* FAINTLY--

--THEN SPARKS *AGAIN!*

NOW, HUMANOIDS-- WE WILL *SEE* WHO SHALL SURVIVE TO SAIL *AWAY* FROM HERE!

BY ODIN! THE *LEADER* OF THE ALIENS HATH ARMED HIMSELF *ANEW!*

SEEK *COVER* ASGARDIANS-- *SWIFTLY!*

YOU ARE *TOO LATE,* LITTLE ONES! NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN DEFY THE POWER OF THE *GRAVITRON!*

AS IT ALLOWED US TO *NULLIFY* THE GRAVITY OF OUR HOMEWORLD SO THAT WE MIGHT SEEK THE *STARS*--SO TOO CAN IT *MAGNIFY* GRAVITY'S PULL TO *UNBEARABLE PROPORTIONS!*

A MOMENT *LONGER*-- AND YOUR OWN INFINITELY-INCREASED WEIGHT WILL PULL YOU BENEATH THE EARTH *FOREVER!*

MILORD THOR-- WE ARE *DOOMED!*

BUT THE SON OF ODIN MAKES NO **REPLY**, FOR HE ALREADY KNOWS FULL WELL THE TRAGIC **CONSEQUENCES** IF HE SHOULD **CONCEDE** THIS FATEFUL BATTLE.

HIS REGAL **FATHER** ...HIS CLOSEST **FRIENDS**...THEY ALL **DEPENDED** ON HIM ...THEY **TRUSTED** HIM...

HE MUST NOT FAIL THEM **NOW!**

AND THUS, INCREDIBLY--**IMPOSSIBLY**--THE MIGHTY THOR BEGINS TO **RISE!**

THE PAIN IS **EXCRUCIATING**, THE EFFORT ALMOST MORE THAN EVEN A **GOD** CAN ENDURE--

--BUT STILL THE THUNDER GOD **STRAINS** AGAINST THE RELENTLESS **FORCES**, HIS TEETH **CLENCHED**, HIS MUSCLES **RIPPLING** AND **POPPING** BENEATH HIS SWEATING FLESH.

HE IS A **SON** OF GOLDEN **ASGARD**, TRULY A **WARRIOR BORN**, AND SO HE **STRUGGLES**...

...AND HE **RISES**...

...AND HE **PREVAILS!!**

THE POWER OF THINE EVIL **WEAPON** IS MOST **AWESOME** INDEED, ALIEN--

--BUT THE POWER OF ENCHANTED **MJOLNIR** IS TRULY **POWER BEYOND COMPARE!**

SKRAKT!

NO! IT CANNOT **BE!** NOTHING CAN STAND AGAINST THE **GRAVITRON!**

NOTHING!

NOTHING SAVE THE **GOD OF THUNDER,** ALIEN!

AND JUST AS I DEALT WITH THY **GRAVITRON,** SO SHALL I DEAL WITH **THEE!**

BELOVED--**BEWARE!** THE STONE MEN GATHER FOR ANOTHER **ASSAULT!**

BUT EVEN AS THE PRINCE OF ASGARD WHIRLS TO **CONFRONT** HIS MONSTROUS FOES, THE STILL-SPARKING **CABLE** ABOARD THE STONE MEN'S STARCRAFT TOUCHES SOMETHING DEEP WITHIN THE VESSEL'S **HEART--**

BWA-ROOM!

--AND THE ETERNAL **NIGHT** UPON THE SOLITARY ASTEROID ABRUPTLY TURNS TO **DAY!**

THE GROUND CRACKS AND BUCKLES BENEATH THE FORCE OF THE **BLAST**--FORMING BROAD **RUPTURES** THAT CONTINUE TO **WIDEN** EVEN AFTER THE EXPLOSIVE LIGHT HAS **FADED...**

SWIFTLY, MY FRIENDS--TO THE **STAR-JAMMER!**

WE MUST **DEPART** THIS DESOLATE BATTLEFIELD ERE IT **DESTROYS** ITSELF ENTIRE!

THE SHIP IS **READY,** FRIEND THOR--BUT WE CAN NEVER **LAUNCH** IT BEFORE THE STONE MEN ARE **UPON** US ONCE MORE!

THEN **I** SHALL HOLD THE ALIENS **OFF,** GRIM HOGAN--UNTIL THOU ART ALL **SKYBORNE!**

BUT WHAT OF **THEE,** MILORD?

PRITHEE, DASHING ONE--DO NOT **ARGUE** WITH ME! JUST DO I **SAY** THEE--**NOW!**

THUS, WITH A DESPAIRING **SIGH,** THE STAR-JAMMER TAKES TO THE **HEAVENS--**

--LEAVING ITS MOST NOBLE PASSENGER **BEHIND** ON A RAPIDLY-DYING **PLANETOID--**

--THOUGH THE THUNDER GOD HAS NO INTENTION OF DYING **WITH** IT.

'TIS TIME I TOOK MY **LEAVE,** STONE MEN!

I PRAY SOMEDAY THOU DOST **FIND** WHAT THOU DOST **SEEK!**

NO! COME **BACK!** YOU CANNOT **LEAVE** US LIKE THIS!

BUT THE SON OF ODIN IS ALREADY WELL OUT OF **HEARING RANGE,** CARRIED ALONG BY HIS ENCHANTED HAMMER IN PURSUIT OF THE SWIFT-SAILING ASGARDIAN **SPACECRAFT.**

AND, VERILY, THE STAR-JAMMER IS ALMOST WITHIN **REACH--**

--WHEN THE VERY **HEAVENS** ARE SUDDENLY TORN **ASUNDER!**

CAUGHT IN THE MONUMENTAL **SHOCK-WAVE** OF THE FEARSOME EXPLOSION, THE STAR-JAMMER IS BUFFETED MERCILESSLY ABOUT, AS THOSE WITHIN THE VESSEL STRUGGLE TO HOLD HER **ON COURSE...**

...AND WHEN, AT LAST, ALL IS **CALM** ONCE MORE...

WH-WHAT HAS **HAPPENED** TO THE MIGHTY **THOR?** H-HE WAS RIGHT **BEHIND** US, AND THEN...

I DO NOT **KNOW,** MILADY. I FEAR THE GOD OF THUNDER CAUGHT THE FULL **BRUNT** OF THE FEARSOME HOLOCAUST, AND IF SO...

"NAY--**WAIT!** LOOK TO THE **SIDE** OF THE SHIP!

"THOSE **HANDS--!** COULD IT TRULY **BE...?**"

AYE, DASHING ONE-- THOR DOTH **LIVE!**

THOUGH I FEAR THE **SAME** CANNOT BE SAID OF THE **STONE MEN!**

MY LOVE, THOU DIDST HAVE US SO **WORRIED--!**

AND I FEAR THIS IS JUST THE **BEGINNING,** MILADY.

WH-WHAT DOST THOU **MEAN,** THOR?

ONLY **THIS,** MY FRIENDS--WE HAVE ALREADY ALMOST LOST OUR SPACE-CRAFT AND OUR **LIVES--**

--AND WE STILL KNOWETH **NOT** WHERE TO FIND THE CURSED **DOOMSDAY STAR!**

BUT SURELY THERE IS **HOPE,** MY PRINCE--!

AYE, MILADY-- THERE IS ALWAYS **HOPE!**

BUT CONSIDERING HOW OUR NOBLE QUEST HATH **BEGUN**--I DO NOT CARE TO CONSIDER ITS **FINISH!**

NEXT ISSUE: BIG JOHN BUSCEMA RETURNS-- AND HE BRINGS WITH HIM... "**SPORR**"--"**THE SLITHERER IN SILENCE!**" BE HERE!

THOR

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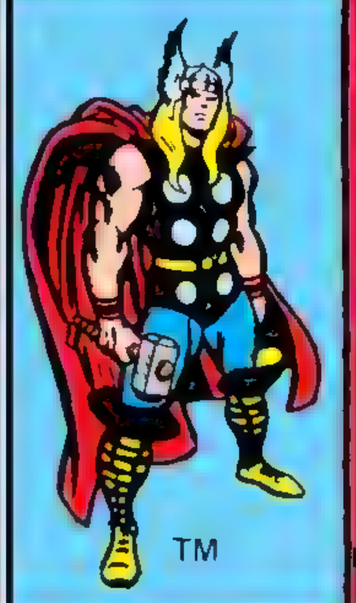
AN UNDYING DEMON FROM BEYOND THE STARS VS.

THE MIGHTY THOR®



TM

THE MONSTROUS SPORR HATH STOLEN THE LADY SIF!

AND NOT ALL MY POWER CAN SAVE HER!!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR * JOHN BUSCEMA ILLUSTRATOR * TONY DeZUNIGA EMBELLISHER * GLYNIS WEIN colorist * JOHN COSTANZA letterer

LURKER IN THE DARK!

IT BEGINS WITH A CASUAL GLANCE SKYWARD, AND A SUDDEN SHRILL CRY OF ALARM!
METHINKS WE ARE BESIEGED ONCE MORE!!
SWIFTLY, MY BROTHERS-- TURN THINE EYES TO THE HEAVENS!
HOW IT WILL END, ONLY THE SWIFTLY-SPINNING FATES MAY KNOW!

BY ODIN! NO SOONER DO WE ENDURE ONE METEOR STORM THAN ARE WE BESET BY ANOTHER!*

NAY, VAST VOLSTAGG--'TIS NOT A STORM ENTIRE, BUT A SINGLE STARBORN ENTITY THAT DOTH HURTLE TOWARDS US...

...AS IF SOME ALIEN INTELLIGENCE DOTH SOMEHOW CONTROL ITS FLIGHT!

* AS DETAILED LAST ISSUE, CONTINUITY-BUFFS. -- LEN.

WELL, WHATEVER IT BE, THE ANGRY MACE OF HOGUN SHALL SHATTER IT INTO SMOKING SHARDS OF...

NAY, GRIM ONE!

BUT, MILORD THOR--!

PRITHEE, MY FRIEND-- STAY THY MIGHTY WEAPON!

FOR METHINKS 'TIS NO MERE FRAGMENT OF UNLIVING ROCK THAT DOTH APPROACH US--

--BUT A HUMANOID BEING ABLE TO SOAR AMIDST THE VERY STARS!

VERILY, WE NOW STAND IN THE PRESENCE OF HE WHO WAS CONSTRUCTED TO BE AN EMOTIONLESS THINKING MACHINE...

...HE WHO SOME HATH CALLED MEMORAX, BUT WHOM THOR SHALL EVER KNOW AS HIS TRUSTED FRIEND AND COMRADE--

--THE RECORDER!

OBSERVATION: IT WARMS MY CIRCUITS TO SEE YOU AGAIN, ASGARDIAN!

CONCLUSION: IT HAS BEEN FAR TOO LONG SINCE LAST WE TWO HAVE MET!*

AGREED, VALIANT ONE!

BUT WHAT DOTH BRING THEE AMONGST US NOW?

* SINCE THOR #162, TO BE EXACT. --LEN AGAIN.

STATEMENT: ON THEIR NEW HOMEWORLD, MY MASTERS--THE FAMED COLONIZERS OF RIGEL-- NOTED THE BEGINNING OF YOUR QUEST TO FIND THE MISSING ODIN, MONARCH OF GOLDEN ASGARD!

SINCE THE RIGELIAN EMPIRE OWES YOU A DEBT, THOR, FOR HELPING TO DEFEAT THE BLACK STARS,* I WAS DISPATCHED TO OBSERVE YOUR QUEST AND OFFER YOU MY AID--

--FOR SUCH IS MY DUTY AS A HUMANOID RECORDING DEVICE... AND MY PRIVILEGE AS YOUR FRIEND!

* IN THOR #220. -- GUESS WHO

THEN STAY AND BE WELCOME, RECORDER!

DECLARATION: I SHALL ENDEAVOR TO BE WORTHY OF YOUR TRUST IN ME!

FOR TRULY ART THOU NUMBERED AMONGST THE MOST NOBLE BEINGS OF ALL!

OF THAT I HAVE NO DOUBT, OBSERVANT ONE!

AND AS THE INCOMPARABLE STARJAMMER CONTINUES ITS INTERSTELLAR VOYAGE...

TELL ME, RECORDER-- HATH THY RIGELIAN MASTERS E'ER HEARD OF THE MALEVOLENT DOOMSDAY STAR?

FOR 'TIS THERE, WE WERE TOLD, WE WILL FIND THE VANISHED ODIN!

STATEMENT: I WOULD GLADLY TELL YOU IF I COULD, THUNDER GOD-- BUT MY MEMORY BANKS HOLD NO SUCH INFORMATION!

THEN MAYHAP THOU CANST EXPLAIN THIS, RECORDER!

SUDDENLY, THE WAY BEFORE US IS STREWN WITH TWISTED DEBRIS!

'TIS AS IF SOME MIGHTY VESSEL MET ITS VIOLENT END HERE!

BUT WHAT MANNER OF VESSEL? AND HOW DID IT...?

OBSERVATION: THE ANSWER LOOMS BEFORE US EVEN NOW, MY FRIENDS!

ZOUNDS!

IT FILLS THE STAR-FLECKED VOID BEFORE THEM LIKE THE RUINS OF SOME HUGE PLANET, RATHER THAN ANY MERE SHIP.

WHAT MANNER OF MADNESS IS THIS?!?

ONCE IT WAS BRIGHT AND BOLD AND BEAUTIFULLY GOLDEN-- BUT NOW IT IS AN OPPRESSIVE GRAY, ITS CRUMPLED SUPERSTRUCTURE ENCRUSTED WITH COSMIC DUST.

AND IT DWARFS THE HOVERING STARJAMMER AS A GREAT GALACTIC WHALE MIGHT DWARF A MINNOW.

STATEMENT: MY DERMA-CIRCUITS ARE ALL FULLY OPERATIONAL, THAT I MAY RECORD IN DETAIL WHAT NOW TRANSPIRES--

--THE DISCOVERY OF A DEAD AND DRIFTING WORLD-SHIP!

DEAD, RECORDER? ART THOU CERTAIN?

VERILY, THOR DOTH WONDER IF LIFE STILL PERSISTS WITHIN YON MONUMENTAL RUINS.

OBSERVATION: YOUR INSTINCTS HAVE NOT FAILED YOU, ASGARDIAN!

MY SENSITIZERS DETECT TWO DISTINCTLY DIFFERENT LIFE-FORMS DWELLING WITHIN THE VESSEL!

THEN I PROPOSE THAT WE INVESTIGATE THIS PHENOMENON, MY FRIENDS--

--FOR 'TIS POSSIBLE THEY WHO CALL THIS WORLD-SHIP HOME CAN TELL US WHERE TO FIND THE DREADED DOOMSDAY STAR!

THEN LET US NOT TARRY, MY LOVE!

UNFORTUNATELY, LADY SIF, IT APPEARS THAT THOSE WHO INHABIT THE CRIPPLED WORLD-SHIP HAVE MORE IMPORTANT MATTERS ON THEIR MINDS RIGHT NOW THAN MERE INTERSTELLAR GEOGRAPHY...

FLEE, MY FRIENDS-- FLEE!

QUICKLY, ALL-- THE MONSTER IS ALMOST UPON US!

WE MUST HURRY, GRANDFATHER! THE OTHERS ARE LEAVING US BEHIND--

--AND IT WOULD NOT BE SAFE FOR US TO BE CAUGHT IN THIS CORRIDOR ALONE!

I AM DOING THE BEST I CAN, DARNAK--

--BUT I AM OLD--MY LIMBS ARE FAR TOO FEEBLE!

FORGET ABOUT ME, CHILD--LEAVE ME TO MY FATE!

NO, GRANDFATHER-- YOU ARE THE ONLY FAMILY THAT I HAVE LEFT! I WILL NOT DESERT YOU!

YOU MUST SAVE YOURSELF WHILE YOU STILL CAN!

LEAN ON ME, OLD ONE-- I WILL LEND YOU MY STRENGTH!

WHATEVER HAPPENS NOW, GRANDFATHER-- WE WILL FACE IT TOGETHER!

THE TENTACLE SLITHERS OUT OF THE DARKNESS WITH AN ALMOST-REPTILIAN GRACE, SEARCHING, EVER SEARCHING--

--UNTIL, LIKE THE SILENT SERPENT IT SEEMS, IT STRIKES!

GRANDFATHER?!?

RUN, DARNAK!

RUN, BOY!!

NO, GRANDFATHER-- I WILL NOT LEAVE YOU!

EITHER I WILL FREE YOU-- OR THIS IS WHERE WE BOTH SHALL DIE!

DON'T BE FOOLISH, CHILD! MY TIME IS OVER-- BUT YOU HAVE YOUR WHOLE LIFE BEFORE YOU!

MY LIFE WOULD BE MEANINGLESS WITHOUT YOU, GRANDFATHER!

I WILL SAVE YOU OR I WILL...

AARRGGHH!

WRITHING SAVAGELY, THE GROTESQUE TENTACLE LASHES OUT WITH SLEDGE-HAMMER FORCE, SENDING YOUNG DARNAK SPRAWLING!

FOR A TIME, THE AZURE-SKINNED YOUNG ALIEN STRUGGLES AGAINST THE SHADOWS THAT ENVELOP HIM--

--UNTIL, AT LAST, HE CLAWS HIS WAY BACK TO CONSCIOUS-NESS...

GRAND... FATHER...?

GRANDFATHER?

...AND FINDS HE IS ALONE!

GRANDFATHERRRR!!!

NO! H-HE'S GONE! THAT HIDEOUS CREATURE HAS TAKEN HIM!

ONLY HIS GNARLED WALKING STICK REMAINS TO PROVE THAT HE HAD EVER EVEN LIVED!

BUT I SWEAR UPON MY GRANDFATHER'S MEMORY THAT HE SHALL BE AVENGED!

BY MY HAND, THAT MONSTER SHALL DIE!!

AND EVEN AS THE ANGRY ECHOES OF DARNAK'S FRENZIED VOW FADE INTO SILENCE, IN ANOTHER OF THE WORLD-SHIP'S MYRIAD PASSAGEWAYS...

OBSERVATION: THE SPACECRAFT HAS LONG BEEN LEFT UNTENDED!

ONE WONDERS WHAT MANNER OF CREATURE COULD HAVE CONSTRUCTED SUCH A PROUD VESSEL! ARE THEY BEING MUCH LIKE WE--?

--OR MONSTROSITIES SUCH AS EVEN OUR OWN IMMORTAL MINDS COULD NE'ER CONCEIVE?

WHICHEVER, VALIANT VOLSTAGG SHALL BE THE FIRST TO FACE THESE ALIEN DEMONS...

...UNLESS--ER--THOU DOST THINK I'D BETTER SERVE THEE BY GUARDING THE STARJAMMER, FRIEND THOR?

NAY, VAST ONE, OUR CRAFT IS SAFELY BERTHED IN A PROTECTED AIRLOCK--

AYE, MILORD--THIS VESSEL IS SO VAST, SEEKING ITS ALIEN INHABITANTS IS TRULY LIKE SEEKING THE PROVERBIAL NEEDLE!

--AND METHINKS WE ALL SHALL BE NEEDED HERE ERE WE FIND THOSE WE SEEK!

IF WE CANNOT FIND THE ALIENS, MY FRIENDS--MAYHAP THEY CAN FIND US!

BEHOLD AS THE POWERFUL FINGER OF THE EAGLE OF ASGARD THRUSTS HOME THIS RUSTING BUTTON I HAVE ONLY NOW DISCOVERED--

--AND THUS SUMMONS OUR OH-SO-ELUSIVE HOSTS!

THIK!

THOU HAST INDEED RECEIVED AN ANSWER TO THY SUMMONS, VOLUMINOUS ONE--!

BUT METHINKS 'TWAS NOT THE ONE THOU HADST EXPECTED, MY FRIEND!

SKREEEEEEK!

A PANEL DOTH RISE IN YONDER WALL--!

"--AND A COMPANY OF HEAVILY-ARMED AUTOMATONS IS THEREBY RELEASED!"

INT... WHIRRR... INTRU... CLICK... INTRUDERS IN CORRIDOR 5843...!

ENGAGE AND... WHIRRR... CLICK... ELIMINATE THEM...!

DEFEND THYSELVES, COMRADES-- WHILST VOLSTAGG CHECKS THIS ADJOINING CORRIDOR FOR OTHERS OF THEIR DASTARDLY ILK!

SOMEDAY, VOLSTAGG, THINE INQUISITIVE NOSE SHALL SPELL THE END OF US!

IF ONLY THE BOASTFUL ONE'S BRAIN WAS THE EQUAL OF HIS BELLY!

BE... CLICK... BEWARE WHIRRR... FELLOW SECURITRONS ...CLICK...

THE LONG-HAIRED... WHRRR... INTRUDER HAS HURLED SOME SORT OF WE... CLICK ...WEAP... WHIRRR... WEAPON AT...

SPRAK!

THRAKT!

SQUARRRKK!

BACK, THOU VILE MANNIKIN!

VERILY, THOU DOST SWING THY MACE WELL, GRIM HOGUN!

THROK

AS THOU DOST WIELD THY SILVERED BLADE, MILADY SIF!

WHEN MY BLADE IS RAISED IN THE NAME OF HONOR, 'TIS NO BURDEN TO WIELD IT AS...

ZAK!

UUNNGGHH!!

MILADY, ART THOU *INJURED?*

N-NAY, HOGUN-- 'TIS MERELY A *FLESH WOUND!*

BUT I PRAY THEE--END THE B-BATTLE *SWIFTLY!*

FEAR NOT, FAIR SIF! THE FLASHING SWORD OF *FANDRAL* IS EVER RAISED IN THY *DEFENSE!*

HURRY, FELLOW SECURITRONS... WHIRR... *BRING THE INTRUDER DOWN...* CLICK...

...BEFORE HE CAN... CLICK...*CAN UNLEASH HIS DEVASTATING WEAPON ONCE MORE...* WRRR...

DESPITE THY DECREPIT *CONDITION,* SECURITRONS, THOU ART *POWER-FUL* INDEED --

--BUT ALL THY POWER IS AS *NAUGHT* BESIDE THE POWER THAT DOTH BE *MINE* ALONE TO WIELD!

THE POWER OF THE *GOD* OF THE SAVAGE *THUNDER!!*

THUS *STRIKES* THE ENCHANTED MALLET *MJOLNIR* AS *EVER* IT SHALL STRIKE!

FOR *ODIN!!*

FOR *ASSGARRRDD!!*

BRACE THYSELVES, MY BROTHERS-AT-ARMS! THE SECURITRONS DOTH *RALLY* THEMSELVES FOR ANOTHER *ASSAULT!*

THEN ONCE AGAIN WE SHALL *MEET* FORCE WITH FORCE, FRIEND THOR, UNTIL HE HAVE...

EH?

ENOUGH, INTRUDERS! THE BATTLE IS *OVER!*

WHAT--?!? WHO *DARES--?!?*

I DARE! I AM RELSTOR, HE WHO IS CALLED FIRST CITIZEN OF THIS RAPIDLY-DYING WORLD-SHIP!

WHAT BRINGS YOU TO OUR WORLD, INTRUDERS? WHAT BUSINESS HAVE YOU HERE IN LEVIANON?

ER-- RELSTOR, PERHAPS IF YOU REMOVED THE SECURITRONS...?

OH, OF COURSE, DARNAK. GOOD THINKING, LAD.

SECURITRONS, RETURN TO YOUR SERVO-PODS UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!

WITH AN UNCOMFORTABLE METALLIC GROAN AND THE SHRILL GNASHING OF RUSTING GEARS, THE MECHANICAL SECURITY FORCE LUMBERS HEAVILY ACROSS THE CRUMBLING CORRIDOR--

--TO DISAPPEAR BEHIND A SLOWLY-DESCENDING STEEL PANEL!

AND WHEN THE SECURITRONS HAVE VANISHED FROM VIEW...

NOW, INTRUDER-- EXPLAIN YOURSELF! WHAT IS IT YOU WANT HERE?

DON'T WE HAVE TROUBLE ENOUGH ALREADY?

I AM THOR, PRINCE OF GOLDEN ASGARD-- AND I SEEK ONLY INFORMATION!

BUT EVEN AS THE THUNDER GOD VOICES HIS OFT-ASKED QUESTION ANEW, A SINGLE PAINFULLY-WHISPERED WORD ESCAPES THE LADY SIF'S LIPS--

B-BELOVED...?

--AND THEN SHE COLLAPSES AT THE MIGHTY THOR'S FEET!

SIF? WHAT IS WRONG WITH THEE, MILADY? SPEAK TO ME, BELOVED!

I FEAR THY LADY HATH PASSED BEYOND WORDS FOR THE NONCE, FRIEND THOR!

I PRAY THEE-- SPEAK TO ME!!

AND AS AN EXPRESSION OF MUTE HORROR SPREADS ACROSS THE ODINSON'S FACE...

...LET US TURN OUR ATTENTION UNTOLD WORLDS AWAY, TO THE LEGENDARY KINGDOM THAT LIES BEYOND THE RAIN-BOW BRIDGE!

LET US LOOK ONCE MORE UPON THE ETERNAL REALM CALLED ASGARD!

WHERE, IN THE THRONE ROOM OF THE PALACE IMPERIAL, WE FIND...

BALDER! SURELY THOU MUST TAKE THY REST SOME TIME!

AND SO I SHALL, NORN QUEEN...

...WHEN ALMIGHTY ODIN DOTH ONCE AGAIN SIT THE GOLDEN THRONE!

I HAVE SWORN TO GUARD THIS SHINING CATHEDRA IN THE ALL-FATHER'S ABSENCE--

--AND BALDER THE BRAVE DOTH NOT GIVE HIS WORD LIGHTLY!

THEN, IF THOU ART DETER-MINED TO STAY HERE, AT LEAST MAKE THYSELF COMFORTABLE!

SIT IN THE THRONE, NOT AT ITS FOOT!

NAY, KARNILLA-- I COULD NOT! 'TIS FAR ABOVE MY STATION!

AND, OF COURSE, THOU WOULDST NEVER DREAM OF REACHING BEYOND THY STATION... WOULDST THOU, BRAVE ONE?

TRULY, THOU ART THE MOST HUMBLE ASGARDIAN OF ALL, BALDER!

BUT THOU SHALT NOT REMAIN SO MUCH LONGER, HANDSOME ONE... NOT IF THE NORN QUEEN HAS HER WAY!

F-FORGIVE MY UNTIMELY INTRUSION, B-BRAVE BALDER...

...BUT THY F-FELLOW WARRIORS HAVE NEED OF THEE!

WHAT--?!?

WHO *IS* THIS WRETCHED SPECIMEN, BALDER?

SOOTH, 'TIS *BROKAR,* HE WHO DOTH GUARD GLEAMING ASGARD'S NORTHERNMOST *GATES!*

AYE, N-NOBLE BALDER...

...BUT I F-FEAR I HAVE *FAILED* IN MY MOST SACRED *TRUST!*

WHAT HATH *HAPPENED,* BROKAR? WHO HATH *DONE* THIS TO THEE?

F-FORGIVE ME, BALDER... B-BUT THEY *MADE* ME COME TO THEE THUS...

...TO BEAR WITNESS TO TH-THEIR *POWER...*

...TO W-WARN THEE THAT THE HOURS LEFT TO THE GOLDEN REALM ARE T-TRULY *NUMBERED...*

WHO MADE THEE DO THIS, BROKAR? WHO IS *RE-SPONSIBLE* FOR THIS PERFIDITY?

BUT SPEAK THEIR *NAMES* AND I SWEAR TO THEE--THEY SHALL ANSWER TO *BALDER!*

IT W-WAS TWO WHO HAVE SWORN TO PUT AN *END* TO THE REALM ETERNAL! VERILY, IT WAS...

AND THE MUTTERED GASP THAT NAMES HIS ASSASSINS IS THE TORTURED BROKAR'S FINAL BREATH OF LIFE...

SUDDENLY, THOU LOOKEST SO *PALE,* BALDER. WHAT *IS* IT, NOBLE ONE? WHAT DID THE DYING BROKAR *SAY?*

TWO *WORDS,* KARNILLA. HE SPOKE BUT *TWO WORDS,* THEN PERISHED...

...BUT IF WHAT HE SPOKE WAS *TRUE,* NORN QUEEN...

...THEN HIS WORDS WERE THE *DEATH SENTENCE* FOR ALL OF *ASGARD!!*

BUT, AT THE MOMENT, THE GOD OF THUNDER IS NOT **CONCERNED** WITH THE SURVIVAL OF HIS FABLED **HOMELAND,** ONLY THE SURVIVAL OF ONE SOLITARY **GODDESS...**

THE LADY SIF'S **WOUND** MUST BE **TENDED** TO, RELSTOR-- AND **SWIFTLY!**

OUR **LODGINGS** ARE JUST BEYOND THE NEXT **CORRIDOR,** ASGARDIAN.

THEN LET US MAKE **HASTE!**

IT IS THE **SMELL** OF SOMETHING COOKING ON A CRUDE WOODEN FIRE THAT FIRST **ASSAILS** THE SOLEMN ASGARDIANS' **SENSES--**

--ABRUPTLY **FOLLOWED** BY A SCENE OF SHOCKING **SQUALOR!**

IN A VESSEL OF SUCH BOUNDLESS **PROMISE,** THY PEOPLE LIVE LIKE **THIS?**

A MOST **DEPRESSING** SIGHT, ASGARDIAN... IS IT **NOT?**

AND I ASSURE YOU, IT IS THE **LEAST** OF THAT WHICH **PLAGUES** US!

BUT THERE WILL BE TIME TO DISCUSS **OUR** SORROWS LATER--

I SAY THEE **NAY,** RELSTOR!

--WHILE OUR LADIES **SEE** TO YOUR WOMAN'S **INJURIES!**

THOR **ALONE** SHALL SEE TO THE FAITHFUL **SIF!**

I PRAY THEE, MY PRINCE, BE **RESONABLE!** TRULY ART THOU **ANXIOUS** FOR HER **SAFETY--**

--BUT THY LADY NOW NEEDS THE HEALING HAND OF A **PHYSICIAN,** NOT THE CLENCHED FIST OF A **WARRIOR BORN!**

LET HER **GO,** MY FRIEND... LET HER **GO.**

BUT I...

NAY, GOOD FANDRAL... 'TIS AS THOU DOST **SAY.**

BUT I SHOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED MILADY TO **JOIN** IN THIS MAD VENTURE...

...SHOULD NEVER HAVE ALLOWED HER TO PLACE HER PRECIOUS LIFE IN SUCH DIRE **JEOPARDY!**

THY LADY IS AN **IMMORTAL** OF GLORIOUS **ASGARD,** FRIEND THOR. THERE IS **NAUGHT** THOU COULDST HAVE DONE TO **STOP** HER!

AND WHEN THE WORRIED THUNDER GOD IS AT LAST **CONVINCED** THE LADY SIF WILL BE **SAFE** WITH THE WOMEN OF LEVIANON...

OBSERVATION: RARELY HAVE I SEEN A RACE LIVING IN SUCH AN OBVIOUS STATE OF PERPETUAL **FEAR!**

WHAT DOTH **CAUSE** THY PEOPLE'S NAMELESS DREAD, RELSTOR?

YOU ARE **WRONG,** ASGARDIAN-- THEIR FEAR DOES **INDEED** HAVE A NAME!

ITS NAME IS-- **SPORR!!**

SPORR--THE MOST **DEMONIC CREATURE** WHO EVER STALKED THE **STARS!**

FROM THE BLACKEST **BOWELS** OF SPACE, THE DEMON **CAME** TO US--AND IN BLACKNESS STILL, IT DWELLS--PROWLING THE COUNTLESS CORRIDORS OF **LEVIANON,** STRIKING WHEN WE LEAST **EXPECT** IT--

--ITS DEADLY **TENTACLES** CARRYING OFF THOSE LEAST ABLE TO **DEFEND** THEMSELVES, THE **AGED,** THE **INFIRM--!**

THOSE OF US WHO **REMAIN** MUST LIVE WITH THE **MEMORY** OF THEIR PITIFUL **SCREAMS!**

QUERY: DESPITE THEIR VASTLY-**DETERIORATED** CONDITION, WHY ARE YOUR **SECURITRONS** NOT ABLE TO **PROTECT** YOU?

AYE, RELSTOR--THEY CERTAINLY GAVE **US** A WORTHY **BATTLE!**

WHY HAST THOU NOT SENT THEM IN **PURSUIT** OF THIS MONSTROUS **SPORR?**

BUT WE **HAVE,** ASGARDIAN--**IN-NUMERABLE** TIMES!

LATER, WE FIND WHAT LITTLE **REMAINS** OF THEM STREWN ABOUT THE CORRIDOR!

WE CAN NO LONGER AFFORD TO **SACRIFICE** WHAT FEW SECURITRONS WE HAVE LEFT IN SO **FOOLISH** A FASHION!

THUS SPORR'S BLOODY RAIDS CONTINUE, **UNCHECKED!**

THIS VERY EVENING, THE MONSTER STRUCK **AGAIN**--CARRYING OFF MY CRIPPLED **GRANDFATHER!**

SPORR MUST BE **DESTROYED,** I TELL YOU--

--AND THE **MEANS** OF ITS DESTRUCTION STAND AMONG US EVEN **NOW!**

YOUNG DARNAK SPEAKS *WISELY*, ASGARDIANS. WE HAVE SEEN YOUR *PROWESS IN BATTLE!*

SURELY THE FATES HAVE SENT YOU TO *AID* US IN OUR HOUR OF DIRE *NEED!*

WHAT *SAY* YOU, ASGARDIANS? WILL YOU HELP US *DESTROY* THIS FIEND WHO PREYS ON HELPLESS *OLD MEN?*

THY BATTLE BE NOT *OURS*, MEN OF LEVIANON!

BUT WHILST THY WOMEN GIVE *THEIR* AID TO MY LADY, HOW CAN I REFUSE THEE *MINE*... AND STILL CALL MYSELF A *NOBLEMAN?*

AND SPEAKING OF THE RAVEN-HAIRED SIF...

WE HAVE DONE WHAT WE *CAN* FOR HER WOUND, NOW SHE WILL *SLEEP* FOR A TIME.

THEN *COME*, CHERISE...LET US GO TO THE *WATERPIT* BEFORE SHE REGAINS *CONSCIOUSNESS.*

BUT THESE BLUE-SKINNED BEAUTIES HAVE RECKONED WITHOUT THE INCOMPARABLE STAMINA OF AN ASGARDIAN BORN.

THUS, EVEN AS THEY STRIDE AWAY, THE LADY SIF AWAKENS...

THOR...?

...PAINFULLY PULLS HERSELF ERECT, HER LOVELY HEAD STILL REELING IN CONFUSION...

THOR?

...THEN RISES TO HER FEET, STILL DIZZILY UNAWARE OF HER TRUE SURROUNDINGS...

THOR, WHERE *ART* THOU?

...AND STAGGERS OFF ACROSS THE FIRE-LIT CHAMBER, UNNOTICED BY THE PREOCCUPIED THRONG...

...HER LITHE BODY STILL WEAK, STILL INFIRM...

...THE PERFECT SORT OF PREY FOR THE CREATURE CALLED SPORR!

BY ODIN!

NOOOOOOOOO

THE THUNDER GOD'S RE-ACTION TO THE TERRIFIED SCREAM IS IMMEDIATE--

--AND VIOLENT!

HAVE FAITH, MILADY!

THY BELOVED IS COMING TO SAVE THEE!

BUT THE UNCONSCIOUS GODDESS CAN NO LONGER HEAR THE ODINSON'S ANGUISHED SHOUT!

UNHAND HER, THOU MOST FOUL AND FECKLESS FIEND!

UNHAND HER, I SAY THEE--

--OR FACE THE LIMITLESS WRATH OF THE MIGHTY THOR!!

UNHAND MY LADY, MONSTER-- OR DIE!!

THRAKK!

THOUGH MY EVERY LIMB ACHES TO JOIN THEE, MY FRIENDS--'TWOULD NOT BE FAIR FOR ME TO STEAL ALL THY GLORY!

STRIKE HARDER, MILORD--EVER HARDER! THY COMRADES-IN-ARMS STAND STAUNCH AT THY SIDE!

THUS, THOUGH IT SORELY GRIEVES ME, VALIANT VOLSTAGG SHALL STEP TO THE SIDELINES!

THY GRACIOUSNESS IS EVER AS EXPECTED, ENORMOUS ONE--

--BUT SURELY 'TWOULD NOT SHAME THEE TO SIT ON A CURSED TENTACLE OR TWO!

FEAR NOT, MILADY! I SHALL NOT LET THIS DEMON STEAL THEE FROM ME!

NOT SO LONG AS THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR IS MINE TO WIELD!

BROK!

I SHALL STAND MY GROUND AND WREST THEE FREE--

--OR PERISH!!

BUT DESPITE THE THUNDER GOD'S FRENZIED VOW...

HEIMDALL'S EYES! YET ANOTHER VILE TENTACLE HATH ENCIRCLED ME--!

THE LADY SIF HATH BEEN WRENCHED FROM MY GRASP--!

THERE IS NAUGHT THAT CAN BE DONE 'GAINST THESE WRITHING MONSTROSITIES, FRIEND THOR!

THWAK!

FOR EACH TENTACLE I SEVER, TWO MORE RISE UP TO REPLACE IT!

NAY! IT MUST NOT END THIS WAY!

MY BELOVED MUST YET BE SAVED!

SKRAKKK

RELEASE HER, THOU HEINOUS CREATURE!

RELEASE HER!!

LIKE A TITANIC FINGER PULLING DOWN A HOUSE OF CARDS, THE MONSTROUS TENTACLE TEARS ASUNDER THE CORRIDOR'S CEILING--

--FILLING THE PASSAGEWAY WITH A DEADLY TORRENT OF RUSTING TWISTED METAL!

MILADEEEE

SKKAR-KOOK!!

FLEE, MY BROTHERS-AT-ARMS--LEST THOU BE BURIED ALIVE!!

AND WHEN THE TERRIBLE RAIN HAS FINALLY CEASED FALLING...

NAY! THE CORRIDOR IS SEALED! THERE IS NO WAY FOR ME TO PASS!

AND THE LADY SIF IS LOST UPON THE OPPOSITE SIDE!

THERE DOTH BE NO WAY TO FOLLOW HER!

THERE ARE MANY CORRIDORS THRUOUT LEVIANON, ASGARDIAN, MANY WAYS FOR YOU TO FIND YOUR WOMAN--AND SPORR--IF YOU ARE WILLING!

AND YOU ARE WILLING NOW,,, AREN'T YOU, ASGARDIAN?

WILLING...?

AYE, RELSTOR--MORE THAN WILLING!

BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN! I SHALL FIND THE MONSTER THAT STOLE MY TRULY BELOVED--

--AND WHEN I DO, THEN ONE OF US SURELY SHALL DIE!!

NEXT ISSUE:

THE ORIGIN OF THE WORLD-SHIP LEVIANON! THE ORIGIN OF THE CREATURE CALLED SPORR! AND THE MOST STARTLING SHOCK ENDING OF THE MONTH! BE HERE TO LEARN...

WHAT WAITS BEHIND THE DOOR!

THOR

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THE MIGHTY

THOR

FOR ODIN!

FOR ASGARD!!

TM

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR | JOHN BUSCEMA & TONY DeZUNIGA ILLUSTRATORS EXTRAORDINAIRE | GLYNIS WEIN COLORIST | CONDOY LETTERER

DEATH, thou shalt DIE!

DECLARATION: I AM THE RECORDER--A NON-CELLULAR THINKING MACHINE, CONSTRUCTED IN HUMANOID FORM!

IT IS MY FUNCTION AND MY DUTY TO RECORD ALL THAT I MAY WITNESS FOR MY MASTERS--THE AWESOME COLONIZERS OF RIGEL! TO THIS END, MY ENTIRE BODY--ITS SENSITIZERS AND DERMA-CIRCUITS--HAS BEEN SINGLY DEVOTED!

STATEMENT: WHILE THE MIGHTY THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS CONVERSE WITH THE INHABITANTS OF THE WORLD-SHIP LEVIANON, I SHALL REVIEW THE TRAGIC EVENTS WHICH HAVE LED US TO THIS DARK HOUR...

...IN HOPES OF PERHAPS MAKING SOME SENSE OF THE MONSTROUS MADNESS WHICH NOW SEEMS TO ENVELOP US ALL!

STATEMENT: WE WERE TRAVERSING THE COSMOS IN THE REMARKABLE WOODEN VESSEL CALLED THE STARJAMMER -- WHEN WE CAME UPON A VAST GALACTIC DERELICT DRIFTING THRU THE VOID!

AFTER SOME CONSIDERATION, WE PUT ASIDE OUR QUEST FOR THE DREADED DOOMSDAY STAR, SO THAT WE MIGHT INVESTIGATE THIS PHENOMENON MORE CLOSELY!

"BUT ONCE INSIDE THE RUINED WORLD-SHIP, THE VOLUMINOUS VOLSTAGG ACCIDENTALLY RELEASED A HORDE OF ROBOT SECURITRONS...

"...WHO DETERMINED TO DESTROY US!

"IN THE COURSE OF THE BATTLE, THE GODDESS SIF.. BELOVED OF THE THUNDER GOD-- WAS SAVAGELY STRUCK DOWN...

"...MOMENTS BEFORE THOSE WHO DWELL WITHIN THE WORLD-SHIP PUT AN END TO THE CONFLICT!

"THEN, IN THE COMPANY OF THE BEING NAMED RELSTOR, HE WHO WAS FIRST CITIZEN OF LEVIANON, WE CARRIED THE INJURED WARRIOR-WOMAN TO SHELTER!

"BUT IN HER PAIN-WRACKED DELIRIUM, THE LADY SIF STAGGERED OUT OF THESE TORCH-LIT LIVING QUARTERS...

"...AWAY FROM RELATIVE SAFETY...

"...AND DIRECTLY INTO THE CLUTCHES OF THE HIDEOUS CREATURE WHO HAS LONG TERRORIZED THOSE WHO DWELL HERE...

"...THE INHUMAN MONSTER CALLED SPORR!!

"VALIANTLY, THE ASGARDIANS STRUGGLED TO RESCUE THEIR LOVELY COMPANION -- BUT SPORR SUNDERED THE CORRIDOR'S CEILING...

"...AND THUS CUT OFF ALL PURSUIT!"

DECLARATION: SHORTLY, WE SHALL ALL SET OUT AFTER THIS DEMONIC MONSTROSITY!

CONCLUSION: IF WHAT WE HAVE SEEN OF HIM THUS FAR IS ANY INDICATION, WE MAY NOT RETURN ALIVE!

THE TIME FOR CONVERSATION IS PAST, RELSTOR! LET US BEGIN OUR QUEST FOR SPORR!

BUT OUR BATTLE PLAN HAS YET TO BE FINALIZED--!

THE TIME WE WASTE PLANNING COULD BE BETTER SPENT SEARCHING, RELSTOR!

AYE, YOUNG DARNAK -- I SUPPOSE YOU'RE RIGHT! WE CANNOT KEEP PUTTING OFF THE INEVITABLE!

COME, MY FRIENDS --THE WAY TO SPORR LIES SOME-WHERE BEFORE US.

THE WAY TO SPORR... AND TO MY BELOVED LADY SIF!

AND I SWEAR TO THEE, IF THAT MONSTER HATH HARMED HER, I SHALL...

RELSTOR! I BEG YOU, MY HUSBAND -- DO NOT GO THRU WITH THIS MADNESS!

SHARMAN?!? WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE, WIFE?

TRYING TO TALK SOME SENSE INTO YOU, RELSTOR! YOU MUST NOT GO AFTER SPORR LIKE THIS!

BUT I HAVE NO CHOICE, MY DARLING!

THE MONSTER WILL SURELY SLAY YOU...AND WHERE WILL THAT LEAVE ME?

SO LONG AS I AM FIRST CITIZEN OF LEVIANON, I AM HONOR-BOUND TO PRESERVE AND PROTECT MY PEOPLE!

I COULD NOT LIVE WITH MYSELF IF I DID ANYTHING LESS!

BUT, RELSTOR...

HAVE FAITH, MY LOVE-- I WILL RETURN TO YOU SOON!

AND HE SHALL RETURN TO THEE TRIUMPHANT!

AND SHORTLY, AS THE BIZARRE PROCESSION MOVES OFF ALONG ONE OF THE WORLD-SHIP'S MYRIAD CORRIDORS...

OBSERVATION: THE TECHNOLOGICAL LEVEL INHERENT IN THIS VESSEL FAR EXCEEDS THE LEVEL AT WHICH YOUR PEOPLE ARE LIVING, RELSTOR!

QUERY: WHY IS THIS?

A MOST REASONABLE QUESTION INDEED, RECORDER...

...AND ONE WITH A MOST EMBARRASSING, ANSWER, I FEAR!

YOU SEE, WE OF LEVIANON WERE NOT ALWAYS AS WE NOW APPEAR, LIVING IN SUCH SQUALOR, SUCH UTTER DEGRADATION!

"NO, ONCE WE LIVED UPON A PLANET THAT WAS THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF PARADISE--A WORLD SCIENTIFICALLY DESIGNED TO INSTANTLY CATER TO OUR EACH AND EVERY WHIM!

"ON IT'S SURFACE, GLEAMING GOLDEN CITIES TOWERED TO THE VERY SKIES--

"--WHILE DEEP UNDERGROUND, PRE-PROGRAMMED AUTO-MATONS LABORED CEASELESSLY, PROVIDING FOR OUR EVERY NEED--

"--AND ULTIMATELY, PROVIDING FAR TOO WELL!

"AFTER UNTOLD CENTURIES OF ENDLESS EXCAVATION, THE AUTOMATONS BEGAN TO EXHAUST THE PLANET'S NATURAL RESOURCES--

"--UNTIL, AT LAST, OUR WORLD REBELLED IN PRIMORDIAL FURY!

"SPURRED TO ACTION FOR THE FIRST TIME IN EONS, OUR PLANET'S FEW REMAINING SCIENTISTS SOON DISCOVERED THAT OUR HOMEWORLD WAS DYING--

"--AND THUS CONSTRUCTED LEVIANON IN HOPES OF SAVING AS MUCH OF THE POPULATION AS POSSIBLE!

"AFTER MANY MONTHS OF DESPERATE PREPARATION, THE LOTS WERE DRAWN -- THOSE WHO CHOSEN TO SURVIVE BOARDED THE NOW FULLY-STOCKED STARCRAFT...

"...AND, ON A COLUMN OF FIRE, LEVIANON ERUPTED INTO THE WAITING VOID!

"FAR BEHIND US, OUR HOME-WORLD DIED! NOT AS SOME GREAT SHINING STAR MIGHT DIE, IN BRILLIANT CONFLAGRATION --

"--BUT LIKE SOME COMMON CLOD OF DIRT THAT HAS BEEN CRUSHED BY AN UNSEEN FIST, CRUMPLING INTO SO MUCH COSMIC DUST...

"...SO MUCH INTERSTELLAR FLOTSAM THAT DRIFTED APART WITH HARDLY A SIGH --

"--A PARADISE SACRIFICED TO STUPIDITY -- A GREAT GALACTIC OBJECT LESSON--

"--ALL GONE... AND ALL FOR NAUGHT!

"FOR THOSE WHO SURVIVED HAD NOT LEARNED THE LESSON OF OUR PLANET'S DESTRUCTION!

"ONCE AGAIN, THEY PASSED THE CENTURIES IN IDYLLIC APATHY...

"...WHILE THE AUTOMATONS DESIGNED TO SERVE THEM SLOWLY FELL INTO DIS-REPAIR.

"BY THE TIME THEY REALIZED THEIR FOLLY, IT WAS FAR TOO LATE!

"THERE WAS NO LONGER ANYONE AMONG US WITH THE KNOWLEDGE TO RESTORE WHAT WE HAD SQUANDERED!

"WITHOUT THE AUTOMATONS TO TEND THEM, LEVIANON'S COSMIC ENGINES FINALLY BECAME CRIPPLED --

"--LEAVING OUR WORLD-SHIP UNPROTECTED AGAINST THE INFINITE DANGERS OF SPACE!

"YET, IT WAS AFTER ONE SUCH METEOR STORM THAT OUR NIGHTMARE TRULY BEGAN--

"--FOR ONE OF THOSE STAR-BORNE FRAGMENTS CARRIED WITH IT A MOST HIDEOUS PASSENGER.!

"WE WERE STILL RECOVERING FROM THE METEOR STORM'S ASSAULT WHEN THE MONSTROUS SPORR FIRST STRUCK--

"--ITS SLITHERING TENDRILS SNATCHING AWAY MY OWN AGED FATHER.!"

THE REST YOU ALREADY KNOW.!

SPORR HAS ATTACKED US REPEATEDLY SINCE THEN, CARRYING OFF THE OLD, THE INFIRM, THOSE UNABLE TO DEFEND THEMSELVES...

...UNTIL, AT LAST, HE HAS STOLEN YOUR OWN WOUNDED SIF.!

AND THAT, GOOD RELSTOR, SHALL BE THE LAST OF HIS MAYHEM MOST FOUL!

ONCE WE HAVE DEALT WITH SPORR, HE SHALL NEVER PREY UPON THY POOR PEOPLE AGAIN.!

ON THAT, THOU HAST THE MOST SACRED WORD OF AN ASGARDIAN BORN!

BUT FIRST, FRIEND THOR, WE MUST FIND THIS MONSTROUS CREATURE--

--AND IN A VESSEL OF THIS SIZE, THAT MAY BE A MOST MONUMENTAL TASK INDEED!

NAY, DASHING FANDRAL-- METHINKS 'TWILL BE ALL TOO SIMPLE!

BEHOLD, MY FRIENDS--

BEHOLD!!

BY THE BRISTLING BEARD OF ODIN!!

THE SHADOW OF... SPORR!!

SWIFTLY, MY BROTHERS-AT-ARMS -- LEST THE DEMON-BEAST ELUDE US ONCE MORE!

FOR THE SAKE OF MILADY SIF AND THE PUT-UPON PEOPLE OF LEVIANON --

--THE TIME HATH COME TO STRIKE!!

BUT EVEN AS THE DESPERATE ASGARDIANS LEAP TO THE ATTACK, SPORR'S WRITHING TENTACLES LASH OUT IN VIOLENT ACTION...

ODIN'S EYES!

AGAIN THE BEHE-MOTH HATH SUNDERED THE CORRIDOR'S CRUMBLING CEILING--!

PROTECT THYSELVES, GOOD WARRIORS, ERE IT BE...

...TOO LATE!!

AND THE CREATURE CALLED SPORR SLITHERS AWAY IN SILENCE!

WHILE, SOMEWHERE BEYOND THE FRAGILE BOUNDARIES OF TIME AND SPACE, TWO SOMBER FIGURES STAND ALONE ATOP A GLEAMING GOLDEN TOWER--

--AND CONTEMPLATE THE FINAL FATE OF THEIR DOMAIN!

'TIS TRULY A MOST BEAUTIFUL NIGHT INDEED, KARNILLA.

YET I FIND IT UNCOMMONLY QUIET, NORN QUEEN.

AND WITH GOOD REASON, BRAVE BALDER!

PEOPLE TEND TO TREAD MOST SOFTLY WHEN A BATTLE-READY ARMY LIES CAMPED AT THEIR VERY DOORSTEP!

AYE, KARNILLA -- BUT WHERE HATH YON ARMY COME FROM? ONE MOMENT YONDER PLAIN STOOD EMPTY, AND THE NEXT IT WAS OVERRUN!

"FOR HOURS HAVE YON WARRIORS STOOD THUS--SILENT, UNMOVING! THEIR ORIGINS UNKNOWN, THEIR PURPOSE A DARK MYSTERY!

"IF THEY MEAN TO ATTACK THE REALM ETERNAL, WHY HAVE THEY NOT DONE SO?

"IF ONLY OMNIPOTENT ODIN WERE HERE TO DEAL WITH THEM, NORN QUEEN--!"

AND WHAT OF THEE, BALDER? DID NOT THE MIGHTY THOR HIMSELF CHARGE THEE TO PROTECT THE GOLDEN REALM IN HIS ABSENCE?

AYE, WITCH-WOMAN-- BUT TRULY DO I WONDER IF I BE EQUAL TO THE TASK!

FOR IF I FAIL IN MY GIVEN DUTY, IMMORTAL ASGARD ITSELF SHALL PERISH WITH ME!

AND, AS AN INVOLUNTARY SHUDDER TREMBLES UP THE NOBLE BALDER'S SPINE, A SHUDDER OF FAR GREATER IMPORT ROCKS A STILL-SMOKING CORRIDOR DEEP WITHIN THE BOWELS OF THE WORLD-SHIP LEVIANON--

--AS, WITH A SINGLE MIGHTY HEAVE OF RIPPLING MUSCLES...

...THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE FREE ONCE MORE!!

SWIFTLY, ALL--GET THEE AWAY FROM BENEATH THIS CRUMBLING RUIN!

THOU NEEDEST NOT ASK ME TWICE, FRIEND THOR!

THEN LEND THINE ARM TO ANY WHO MIGHT HAVE NEED OF IT, FANDRAL--

--AND LET'S BE ON WITH IT!!

AND WHEN EVERYONE HAS SCRAMBLED TO SAFETY...

Y-YOU SUPPORTED THE ENTIRE CEILING... ALONE!?!

BY THE STARS, ASGARDIAN-- WHAT MANNER OF BEING ARE YOU?

AT THE MOMENT, RELSTOR...

...A MOST VENGEFUL ONE!

TWICE NOW HATH THE MONSTROUS SPORR SOUGHT TO CRUSH US THUS... AND THEN SLITHERED OFF INTO SHADOW!

BY ASGARD'S GOLDEN SPIRES--HE SHALL NOT DO SO AGAIN!

THIS TIME WE SHALL TRACK THE GROTESQUE DEMON-BEAST TO HIS WELL-HIDDEN LAIR--

--AND PUT AN END TO HIS REIGN OF TERROR FOREVER!

TRULY DO I WONDER, MILORD THOR, IF EVEN WE POSSESS SHEER POWER ENOW TO ACCOMPLISH THE DEED!

METHINKS THIS IS SOMETHING WE WILL ALL LEARN SOON ENOUGH, FRIEND FANDRAL--

--WHEN WE BEARD THE CURSED BEHEMOTH IN ITS DEN!

THE DASHING ASGARDIAN MERELY NODS GRIMLY IN RESPONSE, THEN LAPSES INTO SILENCE--

--A SILENCE SHARED BY ALL AS THEY STRIDE THRU THE CORRODED BOWELS OF THE DEVASTATED WORLD-SHIP--

--EACH SO CAUGHT UP IN HIS OWN THOUGHTS THAT THE DECAYING BUT STILL-OVERWHELMING WONDERS THAT THEY PASS GO ALL BUT UNNOTICED!

BUT THEIR PRIVATE REVERIES ARE ABRUPTLY ENDED AS...

ODIN'S BLOOD! THE VERY CORRIDOR TREMBLES BENEATH US--!

METHINKS THE MONSTROUS SPORR DOTH ONCE MORE DRAW NEAR!

AYE, THUNDER GOD-- ALL TOO DANGEROUSLY NEAR!

LOOK THEE BEHIND US, FRIEND THOR--

--FOR THE DEMON IS UPON US!

SKRAKT!

SO! THE CREATURE DID THINK TO CATCH US UNAWARES..

KROOM!

--BUT ALL ITS UNHOLY WILES WILL COME TO NAUGHT BEFORE THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR!

ONWARD, NOBLE COMRADES--SPORR SHALL NOT ESCAPE US AGAIN!

NO MATTER WHAT THE COST, THIS TIME THE BATTLE WILL FIND ITS FINISH!

THEN LET THE CLARION CALL RING OUT, MILORD!

FOR ODIN!!

FOR ASGAARRDD!!

BUT AS THE BATTLE-READY ASGARDIANS ROUND A BLIND BEND IN THE CORRIDOR BEFORE THEM...

HEIMDALL'S EYES! IT CANNOT BE--!

BUT IT CAN BE, VAST VOLSTAGG-- AND IT IS!

AYE, MY FRIENDS-- THINE EYES DO NOT DECEIVE THEE!

THAT, INDEED, IS OUR INHUMAN ADVERSARY!

THERE IS A **POINT** IN ANY GIVEN INSTANCE AFTER WHICH MERE **WORDS** BECOME SUPERFLUOUS--AS IN ATTEMPTING, FOR EXAMPLE, TO DESCRIBE THE UNHOLY **ABOMINATION** THAT NOW CONFRONTS THE GOD OF THUNDER AND HIS FRIENDS!

TO CALL IT **GROTESQUE** WOULD BE RIDICULOUSLY **INADEQUATE!**

TO CALL IT **REPULSIVE** WOULD BE AN OBVIOUS **UNDER-STATEMENT!**

TO CALL IT A LIVING **NIGHTMARE** SPAWNED IN THE DARKEST PITS OF HELL WOULD BE **POETIC**, BUT STILL **INSUFFICIENT** BY FAR!

NO, IN ALL HONESTY, WE CAN ONLY CALL IT WHAT SO MANY **OTHERS** HAVE CALLED IT--AND LET IT GO AT **THAT!**

WE CAN ONLY CALL IT... **SPORR!**

BEWARE, GOOD COMRADES! METHINKS THE MONSTER SENSES -- EVEN AS WE DO -- THAT THIS SHALL BE OUR FINAL BATTLE!

AND VERY WELL IT MAY BE, MILORD, LEST WE STRIKE FIRST -- AND HARDEST!

TOO LATE, GRIM HOGUN! THE DEMON'S FLAILING TENDRILS MOVE MORE QUICKLY THAN THE SWIFTEST-STRIKING SERPENT!

AYE, DASHING ONE! ONE SUCH TENTACLE HATH ENSNARED MINE ARM ERE MINE ENCHANTED HAMMER COULD SMITE IT!

BUT HOGUN THE GRIM BE NOT YET THUS THWARTED, MY FRIENDS --

--SO MY DARK MACE DOTH STRIKE FOR US ALL!

WHILE, NEARBY, STAND THE MEN OF LEVIANON, TOO HORROR-STRICKEN TO ACT IN THEIR OWN DEFENSE...

W-WE CANNOT JUST WAIT HERE--WHILE THE ASGARDIANS FIGHT OUR BATTLE!

I-- I CAN'T! I NEVER THOUGHT --NEVER IMAGINED -- SPORR COULD BE LIKE THIS!

WE MUST DO SOMETHING!

F-FORGIVE ME, GRANDFATHER... I HAVE FAILED YOU!

THOU ART EXPERT AT OVERCOMING FRAIL OLD MEN AND WOUNDED WOMEN, MONSTER --

--BUT LET US SEE HOW WELL THOU DOST FARE AGAINST THE FLASHING BLADE OF FANDRAL!

UNHAND ME, FOUL FIEND-- LEST THOU DOST FACE THE FULL UNFETTERED FURY OF VALIANT VOLSTAGG!!

BY ODIN, 'TIS MOST STRANGE!

THE CREATURE SEEKS ONLY TO HOLD ME AWAY WHEN MERELY BY TIGHTENING THE COILS THAT BIND ME, IT COULD CRUSH ME ENTIRE!

'TIS ALMOST AS IF...

NAY! WHAT AM I THINKING?

THIS IS THE DEMON THAT HATH STOLEN MY BELOVED--AND COUNTLESS OTHERS BEFORE HER!

TRULY, IT WOULD DESTROY ME IF IT COULD--

BROK!

--JUST AS I MUST NOW DESTROY IT!

STRIKE HARDER, MY BROTHERS-- EVER HARDER!!

MORE THAN OUR LIVES ALONE--OR THE LIFE OF THE LADY SIF... IS AT STAKE HERE!

VERILY, THE FATE OF AN ENTIRE CIVILIZATION HANGS IN THE BALANCE HERE!

FOR THE SAKE OF ALL LEVIANON-- THE MONSTROUS SPORR MUST FALL!!

IT SEEMS ALMOST LUDICROUS, THIS SAVAGE BATTLE BETWEEN FOUR GAUDILY-GARBED HUMANOIDS AND THE AMORPHOUS MASS THAT SEEKS TO ENVELOP THEM!

FOR SEVERAL INTERMINABLE MINUTES, THE CONFLICT RAGES, WITH NEITHER SIDE GAINING A DECISIVE ADVANTAGE...

FIE UPON THEE SPORR! LET ME UP, I SAY!

...UNTIL, AT LAST...

STAND YE BACK, BRAVE COMRADES -- AWAY FROM THE MONSTROUS SPORR!

IF THY MIGHTY WEAPONS DO NOT FAZE THE BEHEMOTH --

--THEN LET HIM NOW FEEL THE POWER THAT IS MINE ALONE --

-- THE POWER TO COMMAND THE RAGING STORM AND THE LIGHTNING!

THE POWER NEITHER MAN NOR GOD NOR DEMON CAN LONG ENDURE!!

THE SIZZLING ENERGY CHANNELED THRU MYSTIC MJOLNIR CORUSCATES OVER THE TENTACLED CREATURE'S GLISTENING FLESH--AND A HIGH-PITCHED HUMMING IS SUDDENLY HEARD THAT COULD ALMOST BE CALLED SCREAMING!

VIOLENTLY, SPORR STRUGGLES AGAINST THE PRIMORDIAL FURY THAT SURROUNDS HIM --

--AND THEN, ABRUPTLY, HIS WRITHING TENTACLES GO LIMP!

'TIS OVER! 'TWILL BE HOURS ERE SPORR CAN RECOVER FROM MINE ELEMENTAL ASSAULT --!

AND BY THEN, HE WILL BE SAFELY IMPRISONED!

THEN THE TIME HAS COME, MEN OF LEVIANON! IN THE NAME OF THOSE THAT SPORR HAS SLAIN -- WE STRIKE!!

RELSTOR -- NO!!

BUT BY THE TIME THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS HAVE PULLED THE FRENZIED LEVIANS FROM THE BODY OF THEIR FALLEN FOE...

THEE AND THINE HATH DONE THY WORK WELL, RELSTOR!

THE CREATURE CALLED SPORR IS SLAIN!

DO NOT CHASTIZE US, ASGARDIAN. WE FEEL NO REMORSE!

THAT MONSTER MURDERED THOSE DEAR TO US -- AND NOW IT HAS PAID THE PRICE!

THEN COME! THERE IS NOTHING MORE TO BE DONE HERE--

--AND I WOULD FAIN KNOW WHAT LIES BEHIND YON DOORWAY AT THIS CORRIDOR'S END--

--THAT SPORR WOULD STRUGGLE SO HARD TO KEEP US FROM IT!

I--I DON'T KNOW IF I'VE THE STOMACH FOR THIS, ASGARDIAN! WHAT IF THAT MONSTER KEPT THE REMAINS OF HIS VICTIMS HERE?

'TWILL TAKE BUT A MOMENT FOR ME TO WREST IT FREE, THEN...

WRUNCH!

AYE, FRIEND THOR--WHAT THEN?

THEN WE WILL FACE THAT UNPLEASANT REALITY--AND DEAL WITH IT HOWEVER WE...

NAY.

MILORD THOR! THOU HAST FOUND ME AT LAST!

MILADY SIF, ART THOU WELL? DID THE DEMON-BEAST HARM THEE?

I AM VERY WELL INDEED! SPORR TOOK THE GREATEST CARE OF ME!

WHERE IS THAT MOST GENTLE CREATURE, THOR? IS HE WITH THEE?

G-GENTLE CREATURE...? I-- I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MILADY!

FAIR SIF, THE MONSTROUS SPORR HATH BEEN SLAIN!

NAY, NOT HIM-- NOT THAT WONDERFUL TENDER BEING!

WHY? WHY?!?

AND WHEN THE PRINCE OF ASGARD HAS EXPLAINED...

OH, MY LOVE-- THOU KNOWEST NOT WHAT THOU HAST DONE!

THOU HAST DESTROYED A LOST AND LONELY CREATURE WHO WAS THE LAST OF HIS RACE--A BEING WHO MEANT TO DO ONLY GOOD--

--AS BEST HE COULD UNDERSTAND THE TERM!

SPORR MEANT NO HARM TO THE PEOPLE OF LEVIANON-- HE SOUGHT ONLY TO HELP THEM!

HE TOOK THOSE WHO WERE TOO OLD TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES ANY LONGER IN THIS TECHNOLOGICAL WASTELAND-- AND CREATED A HAVEN FOR THEM HERE!

A PLACE WHERE THEY COULD SPEND THEIR FINAL DAYS IN PEACE!

"ANY DAMAGE HE MIGHT HAVE CAUSED WAS PURELY ACCIDENTAL--HIS ALIEN FORM WAS FAR TOO UNWIELDY TO EASILY MANEUVER IN THIS STRANGE ENVIRONMENT!

"AND BECAUSE OF HIS ALIEN FORM--BECAUSE OF THESE PEOPLE'S BLIND, UNREASONING FEAR--ALL THE GOOD HE SOUGHT TO DO HAS GONE FOR NAUGHT!'"

SPORR OFFERED THE PEOPLE OF LEVIANON A VERITABLE PARADISE, MY LOVE...

...AND THEIR FEAR TRANSFORMED IT INTO A HELL!

ELSEWHERE, A GRIM, IMPOSING **WAR-SHIP** STREAKS THRU THE VOID--

--ITS INTERSTELLAR **SENSORS** EVER ALERT, EVER **SEEKING**--

--WHILE, ON THE VESSEL'S **CONTROL DECK**, THE CREW GOES ABOUT ITS BUSINESS, THE ONLY OBVIOUS **SIMILARITY** IN THEIR ALIEN FORMS A UNIFORMLY **MALEVOLENT** EXPRESSION ON THEIR FACES...

LET'S TURN THOSE SENSORS **UP**, YOU DOLTS! SOMEWHERE OUT THERE, OUR NEXT VICTIM IS **WAITING**!

FEE-LON--LOOK TO THE **MONITOR-SCREEN**!

BALZOR IS **RIGHT**, CAPTAIN! WE'RE PICKING UP AN **UNIDENTIFIED** VESSEL NOT TOO FAR **AHEAD**!

WHAT SHALL WE **DO**, SIR?

WHAT WE **ALWAYS** DO, YOU IDIOT! WE COME ALONGSIDE AND **BOARD** IT--

--AND MAKE EVERY-ONE ON BOARD **RUE** THE DAY THEY CROSSED PATHS WITH--

THE **GREY GARGOYLE!**

NEXT ISSUE • THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS --ENSLAVED! BE HERE FOR...

IF THE **STARS** BE MADE OF **STONE!**

THOR

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THE MIGHTY THOR®

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SURRENDER, ASGARDIAN--OR I WILL CRUSH YOUR WOMAN INTO RUBBLE!!

YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE AGAINST THE POWER OF-- THE GREY GARGOYLE!

NAY, MONSTER! I SHALL DEFY THY TOUCH OF STONE--

--OR PERISH LIKE A WARRIOR BORN!!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN: *WRITER/EDITOR* ✱ JOHN BUSCEMA & TONY DeZUNIGA: *ILLUSTRATORS* ✱ GLYNIS WEIN *COLORIST* ✱ JOE ROSEN *LETTERER*

LAST ISSUE, WE STOOD UPON THE FOREDECK OF AN AN ALIEN WARSHIP--AND WITNESSED THIS SCENE:
WHAT WE ALWAYS DO, FEE-LON! WE CAPTURE HER--
OUR SENSORS HAVE PICKED UP AN UN-IDENTIFIED VESSEL!
WHAT SHALL WE DO WITH HER, CAPTAIN?
--AND MAKE EVERYONE ON BOARD RUE THE DAY THEY CROSSED THE PATH OF-- THE GREY GARGOYLE!!
IF THE STARS BE MADE OF STONE!

NOW WE STAND UPON THE DECK OF A WHOLLY ***DIFFERENT*** CRAFT--AND BEGIN OUR TALE ***ANEW.***

FOR, ABOARD THE INCOMPARABLE ***STARJAMMER...***

THOU LOOKEST ***DISMAYED***, FAIR SIF. WHAT ***TROUBLES*** THEE?

THOUGHTS OF THE WORLD-SHIP ***LEVIANON***, THOR.*

*WHOSE MYSTERIES WERE ***EXPLORED*** BY OUR CAST THESE TWO ISSUES PAST. --LEN.

FOR A RACE TO HAVE COME SO CLOSE TO ***PARADISE***, ONLY TO ALLOW THEIR UNREASONING FEAR TO ***DESTROY*** IT--!

'TIS JUST SO ***TRAGIC***, MY LOVE.

INDEED, MILADY, BUT THERE IS NAUGHT THAT MAY BE ***DONE*** ABOUT IT--AND WE HAVE OUR ***OWN*** TROUBLES TO CONCERN US!

OUR QUEST FOR THE MISSING ***ODIN*** DOTH NOT GO ***WELL***. WE STILL KNOW NOT ***WHERE*** TO FIND THE DREADED ***DOOMSDAY STAR!***

OBSERVATION: AT LEAST WE KNOW WHERE ***NOT*** TO FIND IT, THUNDER GOD.

AYE, RECORDER--BUT SOMEHOW I FIND LITTLE ***SOLACE*** IN THAT.

THERE MUST BE SOME SORT OF ***POSITIVE*** ACTION WE MAY TAKE!

IF 'TIS ***ACTION*** THOU DOST SEEK, FRIEND THOR--

--METHINKS THOU HAST ***FOUND*** ALL THOU COULDST ***DESIRE!***

ZOUNDS!

"A GREAT ***ALIEN VESSEL*** HATH SWOOPED SILENTLY UP ***BEHIND*** US--

"--DISCHARGING A HEAVILY-ARMED ***BAND*** OF ANGRY-VISAGED ***BEINGS!***"

CAPTURE THEM ALL--OR ***KILL*** THEM!!

AT THEM, MEN!

WE KNOW NOT WHAT *QUARREL* THOU DOST HAVE WITH US, ALIENS--

--BUT IF THOU DOST COME AMONGST US WITH *FURY* IN THINE EYES--

--WITH *FURY* SHALT THOU BE *MET*!!

THEN LET THE *CRY OF BATTLE* RING OUT, MY FRIENDS!

FOR ODIN!

FOR ASGAAARDD!!

OBSERVATION: THOUGH I HAVE NO SUCH *CLARION CALL* TO LEAD ME INTO BATTLE, ASGARDIANS--

--THE RECORDER OF RIGEL HAS *OTHER* METHODS AT HIS COMMAND!

WHOK!

HIDING BEHIND THAT MAST WILL NOT *SAVE* YOU, FAT ONE!

SURRENDER-- OR *DIE*!!

SURRENDER, VARLET?

VALIANT *VOLSTAGG* DOTH SAY THEE-- *NAY*!!

VERILY, I STAYED *BACK* FROM THE RAGING BATTLE ONLY TO *SAVE* THEE FROM THE MATCHLESS *WRATH* OF THE LION OF ASGARD!

BUT IF THOU DOST GIVE ME NO *CHOICE*, THEN SURELY SHALT VOLSTAGG *SMITE* THEE LIKE...

OOOPS.

YOU'D BE A FAR GREATER *THREAT*, FAT ONE, IF YOU COULD AVOID *STUMBLING* OVER YOUR OWN *FEET*!

THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE APPEARS TO BE THEIR LEADER!

ONCE WE CAPTURE HIM, THE OTHERS WILL QUICKLY FOLLOW!

THEN HOLD HIM STEADY, YOU INCOMPETENT SPACE-SNAKES! ALL I NEED IS ONE GOOD SHOT AT HIM--

--AND HE'LL BE OURS!!

NAY, THOU FIENDS MOST FOUL!

NOT ALL THY STAR-BORN POWER SHALL OVERCOME THE GOD OF THUNDER!!

BUT YOU HAVEN'T EVEN FELT OUR GREATEST POWER YET, FOOL!

NOT UNTIL YOU'VE TASTED THE POWER OF-- THE NEURO-BLASTER!!

BUT THE POWER OF THY TERRIBLE WEAPON IS AS NAUGHT BEFORE THE POWER OF THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR!

THE POWER THAT IS THOR'S ALONE TO WEILD!!

WHILE ON THE WARSHIP'S **FOREDECK**, WHERE THE BATTLE IS BEING **MONITORED**...

INCREDIBLE! AFTER ALL THIS TIME, THOR HAS **FOUND** ME AGAIN!

YOU **KNOW** THE GOLDEN-HAIRED ONE, CAPTAIN?

INDEED I **DO**, FEE-LON! LONG AGO, ON OUR **HOME-WORLD**, I SOUGHT TO **STEAL** THE THUNDER GOD'S FABLED **IMMORTALITY!** *

*BACK IN **JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY** #107 & 113.--LEN.

BUT, IF YOU **KNOW** THIS SO-CALLED THUNDER GOD'S **FIGHTING METHODS**, CAPTAIN -- WHY HAVEN'T YOU ENTERED THE FRAY **YOURSELF**?

CONSIDERING THE WAY HE IS **DECIMATING** OUR FORCES, ONLY YOUR INVINCIBLE **TOUCH OF STONE** CAN HOPE TO **DEFEAT** HIM!

OR... ARE YOU PERHAPS **AFRAID** OF THIS THOR?

I ADVISE YOU TO **HOLD** YOUR REBELLIOUS **TONGUE**, FEE-LON--

--UNLESS, OF COURSE, YOU WISH TO FEEL MY TOUCH **YOURSELF!**

N-NO, CAPTAIN--**FORGIVE** ME, SIR! I--I MEANT NO **DISRESPECT!**

THEN TAKE COMMAND OF THE **BRIDGE**, MY OH-SO-FAITHFUL **FIRST MATE**--

--WHILE **I** GO TO **DEAL** WITH OUR LITTLE PROBLEM!

OH, I'LL **TAKE** IT ALL RIGHT, YOU MISBEGOTTEN **MONSTER**--

--AND THE TIME WILL SOON COME WHEN IT WILL BE MINE TO **KEEP!**

AND ON THAT **OMINOUS** NOTE, LET'S RETURN TO THE **STARJAMMER**...

NEEDEST THOU MINE **AID**, DASHING FANDRAL?

NAY, GRIM HOGUN-- NOT AT **ALL!**

VERILY, THESE CHURLS ARE LITTLE **MATCH** FOR THE FLAT OF MY FLASHING **BLADE!**

THEN LET US SEE HOW YOUR WORTHLESS *WEAPONS* FARE AGAINST A BEING MADE OF *LIVING STONE!*

NAY! IT CANNOT BE *THEE!*

AND WHY *NOT*, THUNDER GOD? NOTHING IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR--*THE GREY GARGOYLE!!*

THAT DOTH REMAIN TO BE *SEEN*, MONSTROUS ONE!

THOU HAST CHALLENGED US TO *COMBAT*, CREATURE-- AND THY CHALLENGE SHALL BE *MET!*

"*NAY*, MY FRIENDS!" SHOUTS THE STILL-STARTLED THUNDER GOD. "BEWARE THE GARGOYLE'S *POWER!*"

AND PRITHEE, FRIEND THOR, WHAT POWER COULD A LUMBERING *STATUE* POSSESS THAT MIGHT...

UUNNHH!!

DOES THAT ANSWER YOUR *QUESTION*, DOLT? DO YOU UNDERSTAND MY POWER *NOW*?

HOW CAN YOU EVER *HOPE* TO DEFEAT SOMEONE WHOSE MEREST *TOUCH* CAN TURN YOU TO *STONE*?

UUNNGHH!!

BUT EVEN AS GRIM HOGUN GROWS *RIGID*, HIS COMPANIONS CHARGE *FORTH*--

--THOUGH WHAT *GOOD* THEY HOPED TO ACCOMPLISH WE MAY NEVER *KNOW!*

YOU ARE *BRAVE*, ASGARDIANS-- BUT *FOOLISH!*

WHY *ELSE* WOULD YOU RUSH HEADLONG TO YOUR OWN *DESTRUCTION*?

WE SHALL *SEE* WHO IS DESTROYED HERE, GARGOYLE!

RELEASE MY COMRADES FROM THY SINISTER *SPELL OF STONE*--

--OR SUFFER THE LIMITLESS *RAGE* OF THE *SON OF ODIN!!*

RETREATING ACROSS THE DECK WILL NOT *HELP* THEE, GARGOYLE! RESTORE MY FRIENDS TO *NORMAL* OR...

NAY.

YOU SHOULD HAVE *ATTACKED* ME AS YOU *THREATENED*, THUNDER GOD-- BEFORE I COULD SEIZE THE WOMAN'S PETRIFIED *BODY!*

NOW IT IS *YOU* WHO SHALL DO AS *I* COMMAND-- OR I SHALL *SMASH* HER INTO *RUBBLE!*

SURRENDER, THOR-- OR YOUR WOMAN *DIES!!*

NAY, MONSTER! NEVER SHALL THE GOD OF THUNDER *SUBMIT* TO SUCH AS *THEE!*

SOONER WOULD I...

...WOULD I...

...I

...I *YIELD* TO THEE, GARGOYLE.

IN TRUTH, I HAVE NO *CHOICE!*

IT WAS NOT MY INTENTION TO *GIVE* YOU A CHOICE, THUNDER GOD!

JUST *RESIGN* YOURSELF, ASGARDIAN... IT WILL ALL BE OVER *QUICKLY!*

AND EVEN AS THE GREY GARGOYLE'S CLAW-LIKE *HAND* REACHES OUT TO *TOUCH* THE HELPLESS THOR...

...WE MUST TURN OUR ATTENTION FOR A TIME TO THE HALLOWED HALLS OF IMMORTAL **ASGARD**, WHERE A **COUNCIL OF WAR** IS WELL UNDER WAY...

KRODAR, THOU SHALT DEPLOY **THY** FORCES ALONG THE CITY'S **NORTHERNMOST** PERIMETERS!

IF THE SILENT **ARMY** MARSHALLED BEYOND OUR GATES DECIDES TO **STRIKE**, 'TIS **THERE** THEY SHALL LIKELY STRIKE **FIRST!**

IF THEY STRIKE? WHAT ARE THEY **WAITING** FOR, BALDER?

THOUGH THOU HAST SERVED THE REALM **WELL** IN ODIN'S ABSENCE, BRAVE ONE--STILL DO I WISH THE **ALL-FATHER** WERE HERE TO LEAD US!.

THE COUNCIL OF WAR HATH GONE ON FOR MANY **HOURS** NOW, AND SHALL LIKELY CONTINUE FOR MANY HOURS **MORE**--

--THUS I DOUBT THE PRESENCE OF **KARNILLA THE NORN QUEEN** SHALL SORELY BE **MISSED**--

--EVEN BY **BALDER THE BRAVE!**

VERILY, METHINKS FAIR BALDER DOTH HANDLE THE **AFFAIRS OF STATE** AS IF HE WERE **BORN** TO THE TASK--

--AND IF KARNILLA HAS HER **WAY**, 'TWILL NOT BE LONG ERE BALDER DOTH **INDEED** SIT THE GOLDEN THRONE AS HE WAS **MEANT** TO...

EH?

BALDER? **BALDER!** COME **QUICKLY**, BRAVE ONE--THERE IS **NEED** OF THEE!

WHAT **IS** IT, NORN QUEEN? WHY HAST THOU **DISTURBED** OUR MEETING?

LOOK THEE ACROSS THE **CITY**, BALDER--AND THOU SHALT **UNDERSTAND!**

"HEIMDALL'S EYES! A FEARSOME **POUNDING** DOTH ASSAULT THE GOLDEN GATES FROM **WITHOUT!**

"YON MYSTERIOUS ARMY HATH **STRUCK** AT LAST!"

POOM!

POOM!

POOM!

BUT WHY HAVE THEY NOT ATTACKED THE CITY FROM ***ALL SIDES***? 'TWOULD SEEM THE MOST ***LOGICAL*** THING TO DO...

...UNLESS...

SWIFTLY, NORN QUEEN-- TO THE ***CITY GATES!*** IF WHAT I SUSPECT IS ***TRUE***, I MAY HAVE ***NEED*** OF THEE!

COMING, BRAVE ONE!

*BUT EVEN AS THE DESPERATE PAIR **REACH** THE TOWERING BARRICADE THAT BORDERS THE GLEAMING CITY...*

KRA-

KOOM!

BY ODIN, MILADY-- WE'RE ***TOO LATE!***

SO! DYING BROKAR SPOKE ***TRULY!*** THY ***NAMES*** WERE THE LAST WORDS ON HIS TREMBLING ***LIPS****--

--THE NAMES OF HIS ***MURDERERS MOST FOUL!!***

THOU HAST ***DARED*** TO COME ***BACK*** HERE?!?

*AS WITNESSED IN THOR #256.-- LEN.

AYE, NORN QUEEN--THE ***ENCHANTRESS*** AND THE ***EXECUTIONER*** HATH RETURNED TO CURSED ***ASGARD*** AT LAST!

AND THIS TIME THE REALM ETERNAL SHALL ***BEND*** BEFORE OUR POWER--

--OR BE ***BROKEN*** BY IT!!

*AND, BACK ON THE BRIDGE OF THE ALIEN **WARSHIP**...*

A PITY MY SPELL OF STONE LASTS ONLY ***ONE HOUR***, ASGARDIANS!

IT WOULD BE A FAR MORE ***PERMANENT*** METHOD OF DEALING WITH YOU THAN THE ***SLAVE-SHACKLES*** YOU ALL NOW WEAR!

THE ADVANTAGE IS ***THINE*** FOR NAUGHT BUT A MOMENT, GARGOYLE!

WE SHALL REMAIN ***NO ONE'S*** CAPTIVES FOR ***LONG!***

YOUR ETERNAL **OVER-CONFI-DENCE** HAS NEVER CEASED TO **AMAZE** ME, THUNDER GOD--

--BUT **THIS** TIME, YOU'RE **WASTING** A GOOD DEAL OF **EFFORT!**

MY PRISONERS YOU **ARE**-- AND MY PRISONERS YOU WILL **REMAIN!!**

NAY, THOU NOISOME BRAGGART!

I SHALL **TEAR** THIS INSIDIOUS **SLAVE-SHACKLE** FROM ABOUT MY **THROAT**--

--AND **THRUST** IT PIECE BY PIECE DOWN **THINE!**

AND THEN WILL I...

AARRGGHH!!

MILORD, THY **SHACKLE**-- 'TIS ALIVE WITH **SEETH-ING ENERGIES!**

MY LOVE, ART THOU...?

I... **ENDURE**, MILADY SIF.

BUT THAT IS ONLY A **SAMPLE** OF WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO YOU IF YOU ATTEMPT TO **REMOVE** YOUR SHACKLE **AGAIN!**

THEY ARE DESIGNED TO **ABSORB** ANY FORCE EXPENDED AGAINST THEM--AND RETURN IT TO THE WEARER **THREE-FOLD!**

FACE IT, THUNDER GOD-- YOU ARE **MINE!**

AS I SAID **BEFORE**, GARGOYLE... FOR THE **MOMENT** PERHAPS.

BUT OUR TIME WILL **COME**, STONY ONE!

AYE-- OUR TIME WILL COME!!

WELL, WHILE YOU'RE WAITING, THUNDER GOD-- YOU MAY AS WELL KEEP OCCUPIED!

TO THE FURNACE ROOM WITH THEM!!

GET MOVING, SCUM!

JAB ME WITH THY WEAPON AGAIN, KNAVE-- AND THOU SHALT SWALLOW IT!

YOU WON'T RETAIN YOUR ARROGANT ATTITUDE FOR LONG, GOLDEN-HAIR!

STOKING THE COSMIC FURNACES WILL EITHER BREAK YOUR SPIRIT--

--OR YOUR BACK!!

WE SHALL SEE, ALIEN. BY ODIN... WE SHALL SEE!

DOWN TWISTING PASSAGEWAYS, DEEP INTO THE VERY BOWELS OF THE GREAT ALIEN SHIP, THE CAPTIVE THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE LED--

--UNTIL THEIR SENSES ARE ASSAILED WITH WAVES OF STIFLING HEAT, WITH THE SULPHUROUS STENCH OF BRIMSTONE--

--AND THEY KNOW THEY HAVE ARRIVED AT THEIR DESTINATION!

BEHOLD THE COSMIC FURNACES, SLAVES!

IT IS HERE THAT YOU WILL SPEND THE REMAINDER OF YOUR RATHER BRIEF LIVES!

ALL RIGHT, ALL OF YOU--GET TO WORK!

THERE ARE COUNTLESS CARLOADS OF STARDUST TO BE SHOVELED--AND THE HUNGRY FURNACES ARE WAITING!

WHAT? THOU DOST EXPECT THE EAGLE OF WARRIORS TO SOIL HIS DELICATE HANDS WITH MENIAL LABOR?

FIE UPON THEE, FOOL!

I ORDERED ALL OF YOU TO WORK-- AND I MEANT ALL!

OR BEFORE I'M DONE, FAT ONE-- YOU'LL BE BEGGING ME TO LET YOU GROVEL AT MY FEET!

ZAK!

UURRKK!!

BY THE GOLDEN SPIRES!

VAST VOLSTAGG HATH BEEN FELLED!

STAY BACK, GOLDEN-HAIR! DON'T FORCE ME TO USE MY ELECTRO-PROD AGAIN!

I SWEAR TO THEE, CHURL-- IF THE VOLUMINOUS ONE HATH BEEN HARMED, THOU SHALT NEED THY MERCILESS WEAPON--

--TO STAY THE RAGING WRATH OF AN ASGARDIAN BORN!

NOW STAND THEE ASIDE, LEST I...

AARRGGHH!!

THE CURSED SLAVE-SHACKLE--!! I HAD FORGOTTEN ITS UNHOLY POWER--!

DO YOU **SEE**, SLAVES? YOUR CAUSE IS **HOPELESS!**

NOW PICK UP YOUR **SHOVELS**-- AND **WORK!**

MILORD THOR... WHAT SHALL WE **DO**?

WHATSOEVER THE ALIEN **ORDERS**, FAIR SIF.

SO LONG AS WE **WEAR** THESE CURSED **COLLARS**, WE CAN DO LITTLE **ELSE!**

THUS, THEIR HEADS BOWED IN RELUCTANT **ACCEPTANCE**, THE SOMBER ASGARDIANS **BEND** TO THE TASK AT HAND-- EVER UNDER THEIR CAPTORS' WATCHFUL **GAZE.**

FOR HOURS ON END THEY **TOIL**, TIRELESSLY, SEEMINGLY **CEASELESSLY...**

...BUT THERE ARE **OTHERS**, IT SEEMS, WHO DO NOT **SHARE** THEIR AMAZING **STAMINA!**

UUNNHH!!

GET **UP**, YOU LAZY OAF-- **UP!**

OR WOULD YOU PREFER A TASTE OF THE **PROD**?

P-PLEASE-- I AM TOO **WEAK.**

GET **UP**, SCUM-- OR **SUFFER!**

LEAVE THE OLD ONE **ALONE**. CANST THOU NOT **SEE** HE IS **EXHAUSTED?**

THIS IS NONE OF YOUR **AFFAIR**, SLAVE! GET BACK TO **WORK** OR...

OR **WHAT**, KNAVE?

OR I... I...

N-NOTHING, SLAVE... J-JUST GO AWAY...

HERE, OLD ONE-- LET ME **HELP** THEE. THAT SPINELESS WRETCH SHALL NOT **BOTHER** THEE AGAIN.

Y-YOU RISKED HARM TO **YOURSELF**... FOR ONE YOU DO NOT EVEN **KNOW?**

WHY, STRANGER? WHO **ARE** YOU?

I AM **HOGUN**...

...AND MAYHAP 'TIS WITNESSING SUCH SUFFERING AS **THINE** THAT HATH MADE ME EVER **GRIM!**

N-NEVER HAVE BEINGS SUCH AS **YOU** COME AMONG US BEFORE...

...BEINGS SO **NOBLE**... SO **FEARLESS**.

WITH YOU **BESIDE** US, PERHAPS WE CAN THROW OFF OUR **YOKE OF SERVITUDE**...

...AND BE **FREE** ONCE MORE!

AYE, MY FRIENDS... WE SHALL **ALL** BE FREE ERE LONG!

ON THIS, THOU HAST THE MOST SOLEMN WORD OF **THOR**, GOD OF THUNDER AND THE RAGING **STORM!**

BUT FIRST, I WOULD KNOW **MORE** ABOUT THEE... HOW YE CAME TO BE **CAPTIVES** OF THE CURSED **GREY GARGOYLE!**

I AM CALLED **GORMOK**, THUNDER GOD.

ONCE I WAS **CHAIRMAN** OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL ON THE WORLD KNOWN AS **CENTURI-SIX**...

...AND I AM CERTAIN **MY** STORY IS NOT AT ALL **UNLIKE** THE TALES OF THE **OTHERS** WHO SLAVE HERE...

"I IMAGINE THE SCENE WAS MUCH THE **SAME** ON EACH OF OUR MYRIAD DIFFERENT **HOMEWORLDS**-- WHEN THE WARSHIP **BIRD OF PREY** FIRST DESCENDED UPON US.

"WE GREETED THE ARRIVAL OF THIS VAST ALIEN **STAR-CRAFT** WITH THE CUSTOMARY MIXTURE OF **CURIOSITY**-- AND **FEAR**...

"...AND WE WERE GREETED IN TURN WITH A MONSTROUS **SAVAGERY** FAR BEYOND ANYTHING WE HAD EVER KNOWN **BEFORE!**"

MAKE THEM ALL YOUR **PRISONERS**, MY TRUSTY ONES--

--OR **SLAY** THEM WHERE THEY **STAND!!**

"OURS WAS NOT A ***WAR-LIKE*** RACE, MY FRIEND-- THUS THE BATTLE WAS QUICKLY ***OVER!*** A CIVILIZATION THAT HAD ***FLOURISHED*** FOR UNTOLD MILLENNIA LAY IN SMOLDERING ***RUINS***...

"...AND THE PHILOSOPHERS AND ARTISANS WHO HAD BEEN ITS POPULATION WERE ALL ***ENSLAVED***--

"--THESE CURSED ***SHACKLES OF SUBMISSION*** CLASPED TIGHTLY ABOUT THEIR ***NECKS!***

"OH, THERE WERE THOSE WHO RAISED THEIR QUIVERING VOICES IN ***PROTEST,*** OF COURSE...

"...BUT THEY WERE ALL QUICKLY LINED UP AGAINST A WALL-- AND ***SLAUGHTERED*** WITHOUT HESITATION!

"AFTER ***THAT,*** ALL THOUGHTS OF REBELLION ***CEASED!***"

BUT ***NOW***... NOW ***YOU*** ARE HERE... BUT PERHAPS THAT SPARK OF ***COURAGE*** WE HAD LONG THOUGHT ***EXTINGUISHED*** CAN BE ***REKINDLED*** ONCE MORE!

THAT SPARK SHALL BECOME A ROARING ***FLAME*** ERE THIS IS ***THROUGH,*** FRIEND GORMOK.

BUT, FOR THE NONCE, RETURN TO THY ***LABORS.*** WE SHALL REQUIRE TIME TO ***THINK***...AND THUS FORM A ***PLAN OF ACTION!***

*AND, WHEN THE HOPEFUL SLAVES HAVE TAKEN UP THEIR **SHOVELS** ONCE MORE...*

SUCH GRUELING WORK WILL SWIFTLY ***TIRE*** THEE, MILADY SIF. PUT THY SHOVEL ***DOWN***--AND ALLOW ***ME*** TO ATTEND TO THY TASK!

NAY, MY LOVE! SIF ***TOO*** IS AN ASGARDIAN BORN--

--AND I SHALL CARRY MY ***OWN*** SHARE OF THE WORKLOAD!

RECORDER, THOU HAST HARDLY **SPOKEN** SINCE OUR CAPTURE!

DOTH SOMETHING **TROUBLE** THEE, MY FRIEND?

STATEMENT: AS AN EMOTIONLESS **MECHANISM**, I CANNOT TRULY BE **TROUBLED**, FANDRAL.

OBSERVATION: THERE IS SIMPLY NO **REASON** TO SPEAK, ASGARDIAN, IF ONE HAS NOTHING OF **VALUE** TO ADD TO THE CONVERSATION!

METHINKS, IN MANY WAYS, RECORDER--THOU ART THE **WISEST** OF US ALL!

MY FRIEND, WHY DO YOU LADLE **SO MUCH** INTO YOUR SHOVEL?

THE GREATER **MY** BURDEN, OLD ONE, THE LESSER THINE **OWN!**

THOU SHOULDST TAKE A **LESSON** FROM VOLUMINOUS **VOLSTAGG**, MY FRIEND!

"**HIS** SHOVEL HATH HARDLY KNOWN **USE** SINCE OUR LABORS **BEGAN!**"

THOU NEEDEST NOT SPEAK SO **DISDAINFULLY**, GRIM HOGUN.

THOU WOULDST DO **WELL** TO RECALL THAT, IN THE **END**--

--'TWAS THE **TORTOISE** WHO DID **TRIUMPH!**

*TIME PASSES, AS THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS WRACK THEIR MINDS FOR A PLAN OF **ACTION.** COUNTLESS IDEAS ARE CONSIDERED AND **DISCARDED**, UNTIL...*

PUT DOWN YOUR **SHOVELS**, SLAVES! YOUR REPLACEMENTS ARE **HERE!**

NAY, ALIEN! WE SHALL **CONTINUE** OUR LABORS--

--RATHER THAN ALLOW ANY **MORE** POOR WRETCHES TO **SUFFER!**

THE CHOICE ISN'T **YOURS** TO MAKE, SLAVE! NOW GET **MOVING!!**

THUS, SHORTLY...

IT DOTH MAKE MY BLOOD FAIRLY **BOIL** TO WITNESS SUCH VILE **DEGRADATION!**

BUT SURELY 'TWILL NOT **REMAIN** THUS FOR **LONG**, MILORD THOR.

AND WHEN THE CAPTIVE ASGARDIANS HAVE AT LAST BEEN LEFT **ALONE**...

HAST THOU DEVISED A WAY TO **FREE** US AS THOU DIDST **PROMISE**, MY LOVE?

MOST **RELUCTANTLY**, FAIR SIF, I SAY THEE... NAY.

SO LONG AS WE WEAR THESE CURSED **SLAVE-SHACKLES**, ANY ESCAPE WE MIGHT ATTEMPT WOULD COME TO **NAUGHT!**

IF ONLY...

INTERJECTION: IF IT IS ONLY THESE **SHACKLES** THAT STAND IN OUR WAY, THUNDER GOD...

...PERHAPS THERE IS SOMETHING THAT **I** CAN DO TO **RESOLVE** YOUR DILEMMA!

STATEMENT: I AM A NON-CELLULAR **THINKING MACHINE**, CONSTRUCTED IN HUMANOID FORM. IT IS MY FUNCTION TO **RECORD** ALL THAT I OBSERVE...

...AND, IN **THIS** CASE ESPECIALLY, THAT FUNCTION HAS SERVED ME **WELL!**

WHAT **MEANEST** THOU, RECORDER?

STATEMENT: I HAVE DEVOTED THESE PAST HOURS TO CAREFULLY **STUDYING** THE CONSTRUCTION OF THESE **SHACKLES** ABOUT OUR NECKS...

...IN HOPES OF DISCOVERING SOME WAY TO **RELEASE** US FROM THEIR TERRIBLE **POWER!**

OBSERVATION: APPARENTLY, I HAVE **SUCCEEDED** IN MY CHOSEN TASK!

DECLARATION: IT WILL BE A SIMPLE MATTER TO REMOVE YOUR SHACKLES AS WELL, MY FRIENDS!

THEN PRAY DO IT SWIFTLY, OBSERVANT ONE!

THE SOONER WE ARE RID OF OUR BONDS, THE SOONER WE SHALL REGAIN OUR FREEDOM!

BUT WHAT ABOUT OUR FELLOW PRISONERS, BELOVED?

AYE, WILT THOU STAND WITH US IN OUR QUEST FOR LIBERTY, MY FRIENDS?

AYE, GOLDEN-HAIR--GIVE US FREEDOM!

OR GIVE US DEATH!!

THEN IT IS A DEATH THAT MAY BE VERY QUICK IN COMING, FOOLS!

OBSERVATION: THE GREY GARGOYLE HAS RETURNED UNEXPECTEDLY!

AND HIS IS THE SINGLE POWER THAT NONE OF US CAN HOPE TO WITHSTAND!!

NEXT ISSUE:

IT'S ALL-OUT MUTINY ABOARD THE BIRD OF PREY--PLUS MORE MIND-BENDING SURPRISES THAN YOU EVER THOUGHT POSSIBLE! BE HERE FOR . . .

"ESCAPE INTO OBLIVION!"

THOR

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THE MIGHTY

THOR®

ESCAPE TO OBLIVION!

IT'S ALIEN AGAINST ALIEN--WITH THE THUNDER GOD RIGHT IN THE THICK OF IT!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

ESCAPE INTO OBLIVION!

THE SCENE: THE SLAVE QUARTERS IN THE BOWELS OF THE STAR-SPANNING PIRATE CRAFT, BIRD OF PREY.

THE SITUATION: MORE THAN DESPERATE!

STAY THY GROUND, STONY ONE--

--OR FEEL THE UNFETTERED FURY OF-- THOR!

BUT ALL YOUR FURY IS FUTILE, THUNDER GOD, WHEN YOU FACE THE TERRIBLE STONE TOUCH OF--THE GREY GARGOYLE!

LEN WEIN	JOHN BUSCEMA & TONY DeZUNIGA
WRITER/EDITOR	ILLUSTRATORS
GLYNIS WEIN	JOE ROSEN
COLORIST	LETTERER

STILL, I DID NOT COME HERE TO *FIGHT* WITH YOU, ASGARDIAN, IF I COULD POSSIBLY *AVOID* IT.

I CAME BECAUSE... I HAVE DESPERATE NEED OF YOUR *HELP!*

WHAT--?!?

SURELY THOU DOST *JEST*, STONY ONE!

MERE *HOURS* AGO, THOU DIDST TURN US TO *STONE*--AND MADE US ALL THY *SLAVES!*

WHY SHOULD WE HELP THEE *NOW*?

DON'T YOU *UNDERSTAND?* I'M THE *CAPTAIN* OF THIS SHIP! I HAD TO DO AS I DID TO KEEP MY CREW FROM *SUSPECTING!*

THERE MUST BE *SOMETHING* I CAN DO TO *CONVINCE* YOU OF MY SINCERITY...

AH...OF *COURSE.*

STAND PERFECTLY *STILL* FOR A MOMENT, FAT ONE--

--AND LET ME *TOUCH* YOU!

N-NAY, GARGOYLE!

M-METHINKS THAT IS AN *HONOR* I WOULD MUCH RATHER *DECLINE!*

CALM DOWN, ASGARDIAN! IT ISN'T YOUR OBESE *BODY* I WISH TO TURN TO *STONE*--

--BUT THE *SLAVE-SHACKLE* ABOUT YOUR *NECK*--

--SO THAT I CAN *CRUSH* IT...LIKE *THIS!!*

WHY, I...I *KNEW* IT ALL THE TIME, GARGOYLE!

SKRAKT!

'TWAS BUT A SUDDEN *CHILL DRAFT* THAT MADE VALOROUS VOLSTAGG *TREMBLE* THUS!

THOU WOULDST BE *WISE* TO HAVE A *CARE* WHEN THOU DOST TOUCH *ME*, STONY ONE, LET THY TERRIBLE HAND *SLIP* BUT THE *SLIGHTEST*...

...AND, VERILY, THOU SHALT *LOSE* IT!

THOU NEEDEST NOT *WORRY*, GRIM HOGUN! ODDLY ENOUGH, METHINKS I AM STARTING TO *BELIEVE* THE GREY GARGOYLE!

SKRAKT!

BUT STILL, I WOULD KNOW *MORE* OF HIS PLIGHT ERE I DEIGN TO OFFER HIM MY *HAND!*

VERY *WELL* THEN, ASGARDIAN, LISTEN *CLOSELY*...

...AND I WILL ATTEMPT TO *EXPLAIN* MY SORRY SITUATION AS BEST I *CAN!*

IT BEGAN MANY **MONTHS** AGO WHEN I WAS WORKING WITH THE SECRET ORGANIZATION CALLED A. I. M.* TO PLACE A **SATELLITE** INTO ORBIT AROUND THE EARTH THAT WOULD ENABLE ME TO TURN ENTIRE CITIES TO **STONE!**

THE CURSED **CAPTAIN AMERICA** AND THE WEB-SLINGING **SPIDER-MAN** HAD SOUGHT TO **STOP** ME...

*THAT'S **ADVANCED IDEA MECHANICS**, FOR ALL YOU NEOPHYTES.-- LEN.

"...BUT, WITH THE MEREST **TOUCH**, I HAD **INCAPACITATED** THEM BOTH, AND PREPARED TO **LAUNCH** THEM INTO SPACE, **CHAINED** TO MY SATELLITE **MISSILE...**"

HOW **FITTING**-- THAT TWO WHO SOUGHT TO **THWART** MY PLANS...

...SHALL BE THE **FIRST** TO SEE THEM REACH **FRUITION!**

"BUT, IN A MANNER I'VE **YET** TO UNDERSTAND, THEY BOTH BROKE **FREE** OF MY STONE SPELL **BEFORE** THE MANDATORY **HOUR...**"

NO--! IT CAN'T **BE--!**

"...AND THEY HURTLED INTO MY HENCHMEN WITH A **VENGEANCE!**"

IMPOSSIBLE! MY TOUCH OF STONE HAS NEVER **FAILED** BEFORE!

THERE'S A **FIRST** TIME FOR **EVERY-THING**, MISTER!

HUH??

AND I'VE NO INTENTION OF GIVING YOU A CHANCE TO TOUCH ME **AGAIN!**

STAR-SPANGLED **FOOL!** SUCH A **SIMPLE** FALL CANNOT HARM A BEING MADE OF RAW **STONE!**

THRAMM!

AS SOON AS I REGAIN MY **FEET**, I SHALL...

WHA--?

THAT **CHAIN**--CAUGHT AROUND MY **ANKLE--!**

STOP THE **COUNTDOWN!**

IN PITY'S NAME--**STOP THE COUNT-DOWN!!**

"BUT IT WAS ALREADY FAR, FAR **TOO LATE!***

*THE PRECEDING EVENTS COURTESY OF **MARVEL TEAM-UP #13.** --LEN.

"WITH MY ADDED WEIGHT TO SPOIL ITS **TRAJECTORY**, THE MISSILE HURTLED DEEP INTO THE STYGIAN VOID OF **SPACE**, INTO A FRIGID **VACUUM** THAT WOULD HAVE **DESTROYED** ANYONE SAVE A BEING MADE OF **STONE!**

"WITH A **TOUCH**, I **SHATTERED** THE CHAIN THAT BOUND ME TO THE MISSILE...

"...BUT, IN **DOING** SO, I SEALED MY **FATE!**

"FOR, WITHOUT ANY MEANS OF **PROPULSION**, I WAS LEFT **ALONE**--TO DRIFT HELPLESSLY AMONG THE STARS.

"MANY TIMES, IN THE DAYS AND MONTHS THAT PASSED, I WISHED I TRULY **COULD** DIE--TO PUT AN **END** TO THE TERRIBLE **LONELINESS.**

"I WAS ON THE VERY VERGE OF **MADNESS**, WHEN THIS STURDY **PIRATE CRAFT** CAME UPON ME AT LAST, AND TOOK ME **ABOARD...**

"...WHERE I WAS BROUGHT BEFORE **SKLARR**, THE SHIP'S BRUTISH **CAPTAIN!**"

FROM THIS DAY **FORWARD**, STONE ONE--YOU ARE OUR **SLAVE!**

NEVER! THE GREY GARGOYLE SERVES ONLY HIS **SUPERIORS!**

I CHALLENGE YOU TO **PROVE** YOU ARE MY **BETTER**, ALIEN--IF YOU **CAN!**

"SKLARR COULD NOT **REFUSE** MY CHALLENGE WITHOUT **SHAMING** HIMSELF BEFORE HIS **CREW.**

"THUS, MINUTES LATER, OUR BATTLE WAS **BEGUN!**"

I COULD END THIS *SWIFTLY*, STONE ONE-- BUT I THINK I SHALL MAKE YOU *SUFFER* SOME FIRST!

H-HE HANDLES THAT STAFF AS IF HE WAS *BORN* TO IT--!?!

OF *COURSE*, YOU FOOL!

HOW DO YOU THINK I BECAME *CAPTAIN* OF THIS CRAFT IN THE *FIRST* PLACE?

NOW HOLD *STILL*, STONE ONE! IT WILL ALL BE *OVER* IN A MOMENT!

"BUT EVEN AS SKLARR'S *STAFF* SPED SAVAGELY TOWARDS MY *SKULL*, MY FINGERS *BRUSHED* HIS SCARRED AND RUTTED *CHEEK*...

"...AND TURNED HIM TO UNMOVING *STONE!*

"NEED I ADD THAT THE BATTLE WAS *FINISHED* WITHIN *MILLI-SECONDS*?

SKRA-KOOM!

"THE *BIRD OF PREY* NOW HAD NEED OF A NEW *CAPTAIN*...

"...AND I FIGURED *I* WAS AS FIT TO *FILL* THAT POSITION AS *ANYONE!*"

I HAVE *DEFEATED* SKLARR IN FAIR *COMBAT!* HENCEFORTH, YOU WILL ALL SERVE *ME*--

--OR YOU WILL SUFFER MY *TOUCH OF STONE!*

TH-THAT IS NOT *NECESSARY*, GARGOYLE!

WHEREVER YOU *GO*, WE SHALL *FOLLOW!*

"AND THAT IS HOW I CAME TO *COMMAND* THIS ALIEN VESSEL, ASGARDIAN. IT WAS NOT REALLY BY *CHOICE*...

"...BUT AS THE POET *MILTON* SAID, 'BETTER TO *REIGN* IN HELL THAN *SERVE* IN HEAVEN'...OR ANYWHERE *ELSE* FOR THAT MATTER!"

THAT'S ALL THERE IS TO **TELL**, I SUPPOSE. **NOW** DO YOU UNDERSTAND WHY I NEED YOUR **HELP**, ASGARDIAN?

FRANKLY, GARGOYLE... I DO **NOT.**

IT'S BECAUSE I'M **TIRED** OF LIVING AMONG **CREATURES** I NEVER WOULD HAVE CONCEIVED IN MY DARKEST **NIGHTMARE**...

...TIRED OF BEING A **FREAK** AMONG **FREAKS!**

I WANT YOU TO TAKE ME **WITH** YOU WHEN YOU **LEAVE** HERE, ASGARDIAN!

I WANT YOU TO TAKE ME... **HOME!**

AND, FOR **ALLOWING** THEE TO ACCOMPANY US, GARGOYLE -- THOU WOULDST **SUPPORT** OUR STRUGGLE FOR **FREEDOM**?

GLADLY, THUNDER GOD... **EAGERLY!**

THEN THE BARGAIN IS **SEALED**, GARGOYLE! WHEN THE MOMENT COMES TO **STRIKE** AGAINST OUR ALIEN **CAPTORS**, THOU SHALT STAND **BESIDE** US--

--AGAINST THOSE WHO HATH BEEN THINE OWN **ALLIES!**

DOES THAT **SURPRISE** YOU, THUNDER GOD? IT **SHOULDN'T.**

I WILL DO WHATEVER I **HAVE** TO DO TO GET MYSELF BACK TO **EARTH!**

BESIDES, IN A FASHION, THOSE WHO **CONTROL** THIS VESSEL ARE AS MUCH **MY** CAPTORS AS **YOURS!**

I OWE THEM **NOTHING**...SAVE MY UNDYING **HATRED!**

SO, I WAS **RIGHT** TO FOLLOW THE STONY ONE WHEN HE STOLE SILENTLY FROM HIS **CHAMBERS.**

IT APPEARS THE CREW OF THE **BIRD OF PREY** HAS A **TRAITOR** IN ITS MIDST.

HOW **ODD** THAT IT SHOULD TURN OUT TO BE OUR VERY OWN **CAPTAIN!**

THE QUESTION **NOW** IS, HOW CAN **FEE-LON** TURN THIS NEW DEVELOPMENT TO HIS **ADVANTAGE**?

AND, EVEN AS THE **BIRD OF PREY**'S SCHEMING FIRST MATE **PONDERS** HIS POSSIBILITIES, A FRAIL-BUT-PROUD **OLD MAN** STANDS UPON A STAR-LIT BALCONY--AND PONDERS THE FATE OF HIS **WORLD!**

PERHAPS I HAVE BEEN THE **GRAND VIZIER** TO THE THRONE IMPERIAL FOR FAR **TOO LONG** A TIME!

BETTER THAT MY SPIRIT HAD FLED TO **VALHALLA** ERE I HAD LIVED TO SEE THIS **DAY!**

"FOR THE **ENCHANTRESS** AND THE **EXECUTIONER** HAVE AT LAST **RETURNED** TO GOLDEN ASGARD, AT THE HEAD OF A MYSTERIOUS **ARMY**--

"--AND ONLY THE BRAVE **BALDER**, AND THE NORN QUEEN **KARNILLA**, DARE STAND **AGAINST** THEIR UNHOLY **POWER!**"

VERILY, IN TIMES PAST, ONLY THE THUNDER GOD **THOR** OR OMNIPOTENT **ODIN** HIMSELF HAD POWER ENOW TO **DEFEAT** THAT DEMONIC PAIR...

...BUT NOBLE **ODIN** HATH BEEN LONG **GONE** FROM THE REALM ETERNAL, **VANISHED** WITHOUT A TRACE...

...AND THUS, THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS HATH **DEPARTED** IMMORTAL ASGARD ON A QUEST TO **DISCOVER** THE ALL-FATHER'S **WHEREABOUTS!**

BUT UNLESS THOR AND HIS FATHER **RETURN** TO ASGARD, AND **SWIFTLY**--

--I FEAR THERE IS **NAUGHT** THAT CAN BE DONE TO **SAVE** THE GOLDEN REALM!

FOR THE FINAL **TIME**, BALDER--**SURRENDER** THIS CITY TO US!

OR WE SHALL **UNLEASH** OUR SILENT **ARMY**--AND **WREST** IT FROM THEE!

AND FOR THE FINAL **TIME**, SAVAGE ONE--

--BALDER SAYS THEE **NAY!!**

DESPITE THE MONSTROUS **FORCES** AT THY COMMAND, THE REALM ETERNAL SHALL **NEVER** SUBMIT TO SUCH AS **THEE!**

SOONER WOULD WE SEE ITS GLEAMING TOWERS FALLEN TO **RUIN** AT OUR VERY **FEET!**

IF THAT BE THE WAY THOU DOST **WANT** IT, FOOL...

SKRA-RAK!

...THEN I ASSURE THEE--

--'TIS THE WAY IT SHALL BE!!

THOU HAST NOT HEARD THE LAST OF US, FOOLS!

BUT WHEN NEXT WE SPEAK TO THEE, 'TWILL BE WITH A VOICE OF THUNDER, SOUNDING THY DEATH-KNELL!

AND THOU SHALT HAVE NO ONE TO BLAME BUT THYSELVES!

VERILY, THE FATE OF ALL ASGARD DEPENDS 'PON THY NEXT MOVE, BALDER!

MAKE THE RIGHT DECISION, AND NO GOD IN ALL THE REALM WILL DENY THY RIGHT TO LEAD THEM!

BUT IF I MAKE THE WRONG DECISION, NORN QUEEN-- THERE MAY BE NO ONE LEFT FOR ME TO LEAD!

WHILE, BACK ABOARD THE WARSHIP BIRD OF PREY...

BALZOR, FETCH THE SLAVE CALLED THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS--AND BRING THEM HERE BEFORE ME!

DO YOU THINK THAT WISE, CAPTAIN? PERHAPS YOU SHOULD GIVE THEM TIME TO GET USED TO THEIR NEW STATUS!

AND PERHAPS I SHOULD GIVE YOU A TASTE OF MY STONE TOUCH--TO REMIND YOU OF YOUR STATUS!

FORGIVE ME, CAPTAIN! YOUR WORD IS LAW!

YOU ARE ONLY FIRST MATE HERE, FEE-LON! YOU WILL OBEY MY COMMANDS WITHOUT QUESTION!

BUT IT IS I WHO SHALL HAVE THE LAST WORD!

AND, SHORTLY...

SO, SLAVES--HOW DID YOU FIND YOUR FIRST DAY OF STOKING THE COSMIC FURNACES?

THOU DIDST KNOW THE ANSWER TO THAT, GARGOYLE-- ERE THOU DIDST EVEN ASK!

'TIS NOT FIT WORK FOR MINDLESS BEASTS, LET ALONE SUFFERING MEN!

THAT MAY WELL **BE**, ASGARDIAN, BUT **SOMEONE** HAS TO KEEP THE FURNACES THAT PROVIDE **POWER** FOR THIS SHIP STOKED WITH **STARDUST**--

--AND YOU CERTAINLY COULDN'T EXPECT ANY OF **US** TO PERFORM MENIAL LABOR!

YET SURELY THERE MUST BE SOME **ALTERNATIVE**, GARGOYLE--

--SOME WAY THOU COULDST **TEMPER** THY NEEDS WITH **MERCY!**

DON'T SPEAK TO ME OF **MERCY**, THUNDER GOD! MERCY IS A QUALITY INVENTED BY THE **WEAK** TO PREVENT THEIR ELIMINATION BY THE **STRONG!**

STILL, I DID NOT **SUMMON** YOU HERE TO DISCUSS **ABSTRACT PHILOSOPHY**, ASGARDIAN--!

RATHER, I CALLED YOU HERE TO **INFORM** YOU--

--**THAT THE MOMENT HAS COME AT LAST TO STRIKE!!**

THEN THE TIME FOR DECEPTION IS *PAST*, MY FRIENDS!

REMOVE THY DEACTIVATED *SLAVE-SHACKLES*--

-- AND PREPARE THYSELVES FOR *BATTLE!!*

BUT THERE WILL NOT *BE* A BATTLE, GOLDEN-HAIR-- THERE WILL BE A *SLAUGHTER!*

COVER THEM, MATES-- THE *GARGOYLE* INCLUDED!

AND AT THE FIRST SIGN OF RESISTANCE-- *DESTROY THEM ALL!!*

HOLD THY *GROUND*, GOOD WARRIORS-- BUT MAKE NO MOVE TO *ATTACK!* THE ADVANTAGE BELONGS TO OUR *OPPONENTS* FOR THE MOMENT!

SOMEHOW, THEY DID *LEARN* WHAT WE INTENDED-- AND THEY WERE *READY* FOR US!

THOUGH, IN ODIN'S NAME, I CANNOT *FATHOM* WHAT *BETRAYED* US!

DID YOU HONESTLY THINK YOU COULD KEEP SOMETHING LIKE THIS A *SECRET*, GOLDEN-HAIR?

I *KNEW* WHAT YOU WERE PLANNING TO DO ALMOST BEFORE *YOU* KNEW!

JUST AS I'VE KNOWN OF ***YOUR*** TREACHERY, GROTESQUE ONE -- KNOWN HOW YOU'VE SECRETLY ***HATED*** AND ***REVILED*** US--!

YOU WERE NEVER ***FIT*** TO BE OUR CAPTAIN, GARGOYLE, BUT NO ONE EVER HAD THE COURAGE TO ***DEFY*** YOUR STONE-HANDED RULE...

...***UNTIL NOW!!***

YOU MADE THE MISTAKE OF DISPLAYING YOUR ***TRUE FEELINGS*** BEFORE THE ENTIRE ***CREW***--

--AND NOT EVEN ***YOU*** HAVE THE POWER TO STAND AGAINST US ***ALL!***

PR'KASH, SET YOUR ***DESTRUC-TROID RIFLE*** AT ITS WIDEST FOCUS...

"...AND, ON MY COMMAND, USE IT TO ***REDUCE*** THE GREY GARGOYLE AND HIS ASGARDIAN FRIENDS TO DRIFTING ***ASH!***"

IT WILL BE PR'KASH'S ***PLEASURE... CAPTAIN*** FEE-LON!

JUST A MOMENT ***LONGER*** NOW, TO MAKE CERTAIN THEY ARE SQUARELY IN MY ***SIGHTS,*** AND THEN...

SPLANG!

IF YOU WISH TO ***FIGHT,*** TYRANTS-- MAKE IT AN ***EVEN*** BATTLE!

WE NO LONGER WEAR THE ***SHACKLES OF SUBMISSION*** THAT HAVE BOUND US TO YOUR UNHOLY ***SERVICE,*** MONSTERS!

NOW, FOR PERHAPS THE ***FIRST*** TIME WITHIN RECALL, WE ARE OUR ***OWN MEN*** ONCE MORE--

--AND WE WILL STRUGGLE TO THE ***DEATH*** TO ***REMAIN*** THAT WAY!!

AND BEFORE THE STARTLED STAR-PIRATES CAN REGAIN THE **UPPER HAND**...

THE BATTLE IS BOLDLY **JOINED**, GOOD COMRADES--

--AND CURSED BE HE WHO FIRST CRIES **HOLD!!**

THEN CLEAR THE WAY **BEFORE** ME, CHURLS!

IF THERE IS GLORIOUS **COMBAT** TO BE FOUND, VIGOROUS **VOLSTAGG** WOULD BE IN THE **THICK** OF IT!

WHUMP

OBSERVATION: **WHEREVER** YOU ARE IN THE BATTLE, MY FRIEND--**THERE** WOULD BE THE **THICK** OF IT!

CONCLUSION: THOUGH THE **RECORDER** HAS SEEN COUNTLESS FORMS OF **COMBAT** ON NUMEROUS WORLDS, NEVER HAVE I SEEN A **FIGHTING STYLE** SUCH AS **YOURS!**

CHOK!

CHUD!

AYE, RIGELLIAN...

...TRULY IS THE VOLUMINOUS ONE **UNIQUE** AMONGST ALL THE **GODS** OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--

--AND **PRAISE** BE TO ALL-WISE **ODIN** FOR THAT!

WHOK!

BUT **ALL** WHO DWELL WITHIN THE REALM ETERNAL ARE **WARRIORS BORN**, RECORDER--

BROK!

--AND EVEN THE MAIL-CLAD **FIST** OF THE LADY SIF IS MORE THAN A **MATCH** FOR SUCH CREATURES AS **THESE!**

THE CONFLICT IS BECOMING SO **SAVAGE**, I DOUBT ANYONE WILL **NOTICE** MY SUDDEN **ABSENCE!**

IT APPEARS THE TIME HAS COME FOR ME TO **ESCAPE** THIS MADNESS AT LAST!

BUT, UNFORTUNATELY...

I KNEW I WOULD BE **WISE** TO KEEP MY **EYE** ON THE GARGOYLE!

HE LEAVES THE **OTHERS** TO FIGHT HIS BATTLE **FOR** HIM WHILE HE **FLEES** LIKE A SPINELESS **WORM!**

BUT IF I AM EVER TO TRULY BECOME **CAPTAIN** OF THIS SHIP, I WILL REQUIRE SOME DISPLAY OF MY **POWER** BEFORE THE CREW--

--AND THE SUREST WAY OF **ACCOMPLISHING** THAT IS TO LAY THEIR **FORMER** CAPTAIN AT THEIR FEET...

...A BROKEN **CORPSE!!**

*ON THE **BRIDGE** OF THE BIRD OF PREY, FLAILING **FISTS** AND DESPERATELY-WIELDED **SHOVELS** STRUGGLE ON--*

*--AGAINST HASTILY-AIMED **WEAPONS** WITH THE POWER TO DEVASTATE **STARS!***

*WHILE, IN THE STAR-SPANNING VESSEL'S **SHUTTLECRAFT BAY...***

THERE IT **IS**--MY SOLE REMAINING **HOPE!**

I ONLY PRAY I'VE LEARNED **ENOUGH** ABOUT THE STARCRAFT'S **WORKINGS** DURING MY TIME HERE, SO I CAN PROGRAM ITS **AUTOMATIC PILOT** TO RETURN ME TO **EARTH!**

I NEVER DARED **ATTEMPT** THIS BEFORE, FOR FEAR FEE-LON OR ONE OF THE OTHERS WOULD **DETECT** MY ESCAPE--

--AND BLAST ME INTO SO MUCH **SPACE DEBRIS** WITHOUT HESITATION!

BUT **NOW** I CAN...

NOW YOU CAN TURN AROUND **SLOWLY**, GARGOYLE--

--**AND DIE!!**

FEE-LON.

SO THE MOMENT YOU'VE BEEN **WAITING** FOR HAS **ARRIVED**, EH?

I KNEW OUR FINAL CONFRONTATION WAS **INEVITABLE.**

BY ALL RIGHTS, THE BATTLE SHOULD HAVE BEEN LONG **OVER** BY NOW--

--BUT SOMEHOW, THE FIERCE **DETERMINATION** OF THEIR ASGARDIAN **ALLIES** SPURS THE FREED SLAVES **ONWARD**...

...TO **GLORY!**

WELL, YOUR VICTORY WILL NOT BE AN **EASY** ONE, ANIMAL--

--NOT SO LONG AS MY VERY **TOUCH** CAN STILL TURN YOUR WEAPON TO **STONE!**

WHAT--?!?

FOOL!

I DO NOT **NEED** A WEAPON TO **FINISH** YOU, GARGOYLE!

MY ALIEN RACE WAS **BRED** FOR ITS SHEER **SAVAGERY**--

THWAK!

UUNNGGHH!!

--AND, IN THE END, **INSTINCT** WILL ALWAYS **PREVAIL!!**

BUT SINCE MY **TALONED HANDS** CANNOT HARM YOUR STONY FLESH, I AM FORCED TO RESORT TO ONE OF THOSE **PHOTON-GUNS**--

--SO THAT I CAN **BEAT** YOU TO **DEATH** WITH IT!

HE THINKS ME FAR **GROGGIER** THAN I TRULY **AM**...

...AND THAT WILL BE FEE-LON'S **FINAL MISTAKE!**

WITHIN SECONDS, I CAN **SEAL** THIS SHUTTLE-CRAFT AND **OPEN** THE POD-BAY **DOORS**--

--THEN WATCH IN ULTIMATE **TRIUMPH**, AS FEE-LON IS **SUCKED** SCREAMING SOUNDLESSLY INTO THE **VACUUM OF SPACE!**

TOUCH THAT **CONTROL PANEL**, GARGOYLE--

--AND YOU'LL FORCE ME TO **PULL** THIS TRIGGER **DESPITE** MYSELF!

BUT I HAVE NO **NEED** TO TOUCH THIS PANEL, ANIMAL...

...WHEN I CAN SIMPLY TOUCH **YOU** INSTEAD!!

I **EXPECTED** AS MUCH FROM YOU, GARGOYLE! BUT BEFORE YOUR CURSED HANDS CAN TURN ME TO **STONE**, THEY MUST FIRST **STRIKE** ME--

--AND I'VE NO INTENTION OF ALLOWING THEM TO **DO** THAT!

PANIC SEIZES THE PIRATE CREW AS THE RELENTLESS EX-SLAVES PRESS THEIR UNEXPECTED **ADVANTAGE**...

ONWARD, MY FRIENDS-- TO **VICTORY!!**

THE PIRATES' **CAUSE** IS AT LONG LAST **LOST**...AND THEY **KNOW** IT!

YOU HAVEN'T GOT A **CHANCE**, GARGOYLE! SURRENDER **NOW**--

--OR I SWEAR **YOUR** DEATH WILL BE FAR MORE **PAINFUL** THAN THE DEATH YOU SUFFERED ON **SKLARR!**

STOP **THRASHING ABOUT**, YOU FOOL-- BEFORE YOU **DAMAGE** THIS SHUTTLECRAFT BEYOND **REPAIR!**

BUT EVEN AS THE GREY GARGOYLE WRENCHES **FREE** OF THE DESPERATE FEE-LON'S **GRASP**...

CLICK

EH? I--I'VE SLAMMED AGAINST THE **CONTROL PANEL**-- AND ACCIDENTALLY **ACTIVATED** THE SHUTTLECRAFT'S **LAUNCH SEQUENCE!**

AND INSTANTLY, SENSITIVE **AUTOMATIC RELAYS** COME INTO PLAY:

THE SHUTTLECRAFT SEALS **SHUT** WITH A SIBILANT **HISS.**

THE STERILIZED **AIR** WITHIN THE CHAMBER IS **PUMPED** INTO HIDDEN TANKS.

THE WAITING **HATCH** IN THE BIRD OF PREY'S SIDE SLIDES **OPEN.**

AND, SILENTLY, POWERFUL **ROCKETS** ARE ACTIVATED AT THE SHUTTLE-CRAFT'S **REAR...**

...WHICH SEND THE TINY VESSEL HURTLING SAVAGELY INTO THE **VOID!**

METHINKS THE BATTLE AT LAST IS **OVER**, FRIEND THOR.

AYE, DASHING FANDRAL-- OUR NEW-FOUND COMRADES HATH MORE THAN **EARNED** THEIR LONG-SOUGHT **FREEDOM!**

OBSERVATION: IT APPEARS THE GREY GARGOYLE **FLED** DURING ALL THE **CONFUSION,** MY FRIENDS.

THEN, ENLISTING OUR **AID** SO THAT HE MIGHT **ESCAPE** HIS GRIM CAPTIVITY HERE WAS NAUGHT BUT A VILE **RUSE!**

SO IT WOULD **APPEAR,** MILADY! FOR A SMALL **SHUTTLECRAFT** DOTH FLEE THIS VESSEL EVEN AS WE **SPEAK--**

--AND I'D WAGER THAT THE **GARGOYLE** DOTH SIT AT ITS **CONTROLS!**

BUT UNFORTUNATELY, AT THE MOMENT, **NOBODY** SITS AT ITS CONTROLS...

I MUST TURN THIS SHIP **AROUND**-- RETURN IT TO THE **BIRD OF PREY** BEFORE IT IS **TOO LATE!**

NO!!

I WON'T LET YOU **DESTROY** MY FINAL CHANCE TO RETURN **HOME!**

YOU CRAZY **FOOL**-- LET **GO** OF ME--!!

SAVAGELY, FEE-LON HURLS HIS STONY ADVERSARY **FROM** HIM, THROWING THE GARGOYLE **OFF-BALANCE**, SENDING HIM GROPING BLINDLY FOR **SUPPORT**...

THE **RESULT** OF THAT ACTION IS **CATASTROPHIC!**

YOU **FOOL!** YOU'VE DOOMED US **BOTH!** YOUR TOUCH HAS TURNED THE VERY CONTROL PANEL TO **STONE!**

NO! WITHOUT THE **CONTROL PANEL**, I HAVEN'T GOT A **PRAYER** OF FINDING **EARTH** AGAIN!

I'VE GOT TO FIND SOME WAY TO CHANGE IT **BACK** BEFORE...

EH? IT--IT'S CRUMBLING TO **POWDER** IN MY HANDS!

WHAT HAVE I **DONE** TO MYSELF? **WHAT HAVE I DONE??**

THE ANSWER WOULD BE **OBVIOUS** TO ANYONE WATCHING THE SHUTTLECRAFT CAROM **OUT OF CONTROL** ON THE BIRD OF PREY'S **VIEW-SCREEN:**

THE GREY GARGOYLE HAS COMMITTED **UNINTENTIONAL SUICIDE!!**

GONE...

...AS IF HE HAD NEVER **BEEN!**

THE BIRD OF PREY IS **THINE** NOW, GOOD COMRADES -- TO **DO** WITH AS THOU **WOULDST!**

I PRAY THEE -- USE IT **WISELY!**

WE **HOPE** TO, MY FRIEND, IT SEEMS **MOST** OF US STILL HAVE **FAMILY** SCATTERED ABOUT THE GALAXY!

THE FATES WILLING, WE SHALL **FIND** THEM AGAIN!

AND **YOU**, MY FRIEND? WHAT ARE **YOUR** PLANS NOW?

I **ALSO** SEEK MISSING **FAMILY**, GORMOK, AND MY QUEST SHALL **GO ON** UNTIL MY FATHER HATH BEEN **FOUND**--

-- BE HE **ALIVE**... OR **DEAD!**

NEXT ISSUE: BALDER AND KARNILLA STAND ALONE AGAINST THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE EXECUTIONER! PLUS, THE BOULEVARD OF BROKEN GODS...THE WALL AROUND THE WORLD... AND A SHOCKING **SURPRISE** YOU DARE NOT **MISS!** BE HERE FOR...

"THE VICIOUS AND THE VALIANT!"

THOR ®

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THE MIGHTY

THOR ®

AND NOT ALL MY POWER CAN SAVE THEM!!!

BALDER AND THE NORN QUEEN FIGHT A LOSING BATTLE 'GAINST THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE EXECUTIONER!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN * TONY DeZUNIGA * GLYNIS W. * J. COSTANZA * PROUDLY PRESENT WALT SIMONSON
WRITER/EDITOR EMBELLISHER colorist letterer ILLUSTRATOR

IN THE IMMORTAL WORDS OF IRVING FORBUSH, EFFENDI--SO BE IT!"

The VICIOUS AND THE VALIANT

THE AIR IS CHARGED WITH AN ELECTRIC TENSION HERE, DEEP WITHIN THE CEREBRAL COMPUTER NEXUS AT THE HEART OF THE ALIEN STARCRAFT ONCE CALLED THE BIRD OF PREY, NOW NEWLY RECHRISTENED THE PHOENIX OF FREEDOM.

FOR HERE, A MOST DELICATE OPERATION IS UNDER WAY--WITH THE FATE OF AN EMPIRE HANGING IN THE BALANCE!

HAVE A CARE, FRIEND RECORDER. I WOULD NOT HAVE THEE RISK THY LIFE ON OUR BEHALF!

OBSERVATION: YOU FORGET, THUNDER GOD, THAT I AM MERELY A NON-CELLULAR THINKING MACHINE, CONSTRUCTED IN HUMANOID FORM. I CANNOT TRULY BE KILLED...

...AND WHEN IT COMES TO DEALING WITH COMPUTERS, THOR--I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT I AM DOING!

NEVERTHELESS, RECORDER, PLUGGING THYSELF DIRECTLY *INTO* THIS VESSEL'S *COMPUTER* THUS CAN BE *DANGEROUS*--

--AND THINE UNTIMELY *DESTRUCTION* WOULD WEIGH MOST HEAVILY 'PON MY *CONSCIENCE!*

STATEMENT: THEN *EASE* YOUR CONSCIENCE, ASGARDIAN--FOR I AM DOING WHAT I *MUST!*

DECLARATION: IT IS MY *DUTY* TO RECORD ALL THAT I MAY SEE AND HEAR FOR MY RIGELLIAN *MASTERS*...

...AND THE *KNOWLEDGE* WHICH NOW COURSES *THRU* ME FILLS ME WITH A SENSE OF *ACCOMPLISHMENT* SUCH AS I HAVE NEVER KNOWN *BEFORE!*

STATEMENT: A MOMENT *LONGER*, MY FRIENDS--AND I SHALL *POSSESS* THE INFORMATION YOU DESIRED OF... *AARRRGGHH!!*

DECLARATION: TOO MUCH *POWER*... CANNOT *CONTAIN* IT ALL... MY INTERNAL *CIRCUITRY*... *OVERLOADING!!*

ODIN'S EYES! TO SAVE THE *RECORDER*, YON MECHANISM MUST BE SWIFTLY *DISENGAGED*--

--BUT I POSSESS NOT THE SKILL TO *ACCOMPLISH* THE DEED!

YET, THOUGH I MAY LACK *KNOWLEDGE*--POWER STILL BE *MINE!*

POWER ENOW TO *STRIKE* WITHOUT HESITATION--

--AND POWER ENOW TO *SUCCEED!*

FRIEND RECORDER, ART THOU SORELY *WOUNDED?*

OBSERVATION: IT APPEARS... I WILL... *SURVIVE*, ODINSON.

SURVIVAL: IT IS A MATTER THAT CONCERNS ALL WHO DWELL WITHIN THE GOLDEN CITY IMPERIAL OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--

--WHICH IS COMPLETELY UNDERSTANDABLE, CONSIDERING THE SILENT ARMY WHICH STANDS CAMPED JUST BEYOND THE CITY'S GATES!

BUT, WHILE ALL ASGARDIANS ARE CONCERNED ABOUT THEIR FUTURE, THERE IS ONLY ONE WHO INTENDS TO DO SOMETHING ABOUT IT!

FOR, BY AN ALL-BUT-FORGOTTEN PASSAGEWAY THAT LEADS FROM THE GLEAMING CITY...

'TIS STILL NOT TOO LATE TO FORESWEAR THIS FOOLISHNESS, BRAVE BALDER!

NAY, NORN QUEEN-- THIS IS THE ONLY WAY TO DETERMINE THE STRENGTH OF OUR ENEMY!

THE MIGHTY THOR DID CHARGE ME TO PROTECT THE REALM ETERNAL IN THE UNTIMELY ABSENCE OF ALMIGHTY ODIN...

...AND IF I MUST DON SOME UNSEEMLY DISGUISE AND STRIDE INTO THE VERY THICK OF OUR FOES TO BE WORTHY OF THE THUNDER GOD'S TRUST--

AND THE PRAYERS OF THE NORN QUEEN KARNILLA SHALL GO WITH THEE!

--THEN THAT IS PRECISELY WHAT I SHALL DO!

THERE BE THE GLOW OF THEIR *CAMPFIRE* YONDER--

--BEYOND TREES WHICH SEEM SOMEHOW *TWISTED* BY THE EVIL PRESENCE IN THEIR *MIDST!*

'TIS MOST PASSING *STRANGE!* NE'ER BEFORE HAVE I SEEN AN *ENCAMPMENT* SUCH AS THIS!

THERE BE NO SIGN OF *CAM RADERIE*-- NO IDLE TALK OF THE *BATTLE* TO COME!

THEY DO NOT *MOVE!*

'TIS ALMOST AS IF THEY POSSESSED NO *WILL* OF THEIR OWN--AS IF THEY WERE UNDER SOME ARCANE *SPELL* OR...

HEIMDALL'S EYES! HOW COULD I BE SO *BLIND?*

THEY SERVE ONLY THE EVIL *ENCHANTRESS!*

I MUST SWIFTLY *STEAL AWAY* ERE... *EH?*

AS *ONE*, THE SILENT WARRIORS ABRUPTLY *STAND*-- FROM SHEER *MALEVOLENCE* GLARING AT ME FROM BENEATH THEIR SHADOWED HELMETS--!?!

THEY HAVE SEEN THRU MY *DECEPTION*-- AND LEAP TO THE *ATTACK!*

BUT IF 'TIS *BATTLE* THEY DESIRE, THEY SHALL FIND *BALDER THE BRAVE* MORE THAN WILLING TO *OBLIGE* THEM!

FAR *TOO LONG* HAVE YE THREATENED THE *SAFETY* OF THE REALM ETERNAL! NOW SHALT THOU *FALL* BEFORE THE MIGHT OF...

SHRAKT!

ZOUNDS.

THE SILENT WARRIORS WHO HAVE *SUFFERED* 'NEATH MY SLASHING *SWORD*...

"...THEY ARE NAUGHT BUT *EMPTY SUITS OF ARMOR!!*

"DOTH THE ENCHANTRESS'S VILE *SORCERY* KNOW NO *BOUNDS?*"

THEN *COME,* THOU DEMONS MOST FOUL!

COME YE--AND *TASTE* OF BALDER'S *BLADE!*

COME YE *ALL*--AND FEEL THE RIGHTEOUS *FURY* OF A *WARRIOR BORN!!*

WHAT UTTER *FOOLS* WE OF ASGARD HAVE BEEN, THAT WE COULD E'ER HAVE *COWERED* BEFORE THE EMPTY *THREAT* OF SUCH AS...

AARRGGHH!!

ZAK!

WHILE, BACK ABOARD THE PHOENIX OF FREEDOM...

DECLARATION: I AM FEELING MUCH STRONGER NOW, MY FRIEND!

STILL, THOU WOULDST DO WELL TO LEAN ON ME, RECORDER--TILL WE REACH THE DRY-DOCKED STAR-JAMMER!

THEN, ACTING 'PON THE INFORMATION THOU HAST ABSORBED, WE SHALL...

OD'S BLOOD!!

WHAT MANNER OF MADNESS HOLDS SWAY HERE?

NO MADNESS, MILORD THOR. WE'VE MERELY PUT OUR TIME TO FITTING USE WHILST THOU WERT OTHERWISE OCCUPIED.

ONE MIGHT HUMBLY ADD 'TWAS A PLAN OF VALOROUS VOLSTAGG'S DE-VISING, MY PRINCE!

INDEED ONE MIGHT, VAST ONE... IF IT WERE TRUE!

SINCE THIS MONSTROUS STARCRAFT IS NO LONGER A VESSEL OF WAR, WE THOUGHT ITS SURPLUS WEAPONRY MIGHT BE OF USE UPON OUR OWN CRAFT--

--SINCE WE KNOW NOT WHAT WE MAY FACE WHEN AT LAST WE REACH THE DREADED DOOMSDAY STAR!

MAYHAP THOU ART CORRECT, GRIM HOGUN!

IT SEEMS THE TIME HATH COME FOR US TO DEPART, GOOD COMRADES!

AND, A SHORT TIME AFTER, IT IS A GREATLY ALTERED STARJAMMER THAT TAKES TO THE STAR-FLECKED HEAVENS ONCE MORE...

THE WAY TO OUR GOAL LIES OPEN BEFORE US, MILADY SIF.

AND THE SPINNING FATES ALONE KNOW WHAT WE SHALL FIND THERE, MY LOVE.

BUT WHATEVER, 'TWILL BE A MOST GLORIOUS ADVENTURE!

WHILE...

THY MYSTIC BOLT STRUCK WELL, ENCHANTRESS!

THE ACCURSED BALDER HATH STILL NOT RECOVERED HIS SENSES!

MY POWER IS EVER TRUE, EXECUTIONER!

VERILY, 'TIS SECOND ONLY TO THE POWER OF OUR MASTER HIMSELF!

AYE, OUR MASTER--! HE WILL BE MOST PLEASED WHEN I BRING HIM BALDER'S HEAD!

IF THOU THINKEST THOU HAST SKILL ENOW TO ACCOMPLISH THE DEED, BRUTISH ONE!

BUT BALDER THE BRAVE SHALL NOT SIT STILL AND AWAIT THY DEADLY BLADE, EX-ECUTIONER!

RATHER, I SHALL TAKE THE BATTLE TO THEE!!

THEN THOU DOST RUSH HEADLONG TO THINE OWN DESTRUC-TION, FOOL!

KRANG!

THERE IS NO WEAPON IN ALL OF ASGARD THAT IS THE EQUAL OF MY IN-COMPARABLE AXE!

THOUGH THOU MAYEST TURN ASIDE MY FIRST ASSAULT, NO WARRIOR LIVES WHO CAN OVERCOME ME IN BATTLE!

AGAIN AND YET AGAIN SHALL I STRIKE-- UNTIL I HAVE PREVAILED!!

BTOK!

DEMONS OF THE NORN! THOU HAST SUFFERED BLOWS THAT WOULD HUMBLE EVEN THE STRONGEST OF GODS--

--YET NO OUTCRY HAST THOU UTTERED, NO PITIFUL WHIMPER OF PAIN!

THROK!

CURSE THEE, BALDER-- WILT THOU NOT STAY STILL AND ACCEPT THY FATE?

THOU DOST DODGE AND WEAVE LIKE SOME ELUSIVE SERPENT!

KROOM!

NAY, MERCILESS ONE, 'TIS THOU WHO ART THE SERPENT HERE--

--A VENOMOUS SERPENT, SEEKING TO DEFILE PARADISE!

WHUD!

UUNFF!!

BUT NEVER SHALT THOU SUCCEED, EXECUTIONER--

--NOT SO LONG AS BALDER DOTH LIVE TO DEFY THEE!!

SKRAK!

BY HELA! MY AXE-- HE HATH SHATTERED IT!?!

DESPITE HIS GREATER SIZE AND STRENGTH, METHINKS 'TIS MY BRUTISH ALLY WHO SHALL LOSE THIS SORRY BATTLE--

--UNLESS I LEND HIM UNSEEN AID... AND SWIFTLY!

WILT THOU SURRENDER, EXECUTIONER?

NAY! SOONER WOULD I...

EH? SUDDENLY, I FEEL NEW POWER COURSING THRU ME--

--AS IF I NOW DRAW STAMINA FROM THE VERY EARTH ITSELF!

'TIS THE ENCHANTRESS'S DOING, I'D WAGER--

--AND IT HATH TURNED THE TIDE OF BATTLE IN MY FAVOR ONCE MORE!!

THRACK!

BY ODIN! WHAT SORCERY IS THIS? THE MONSTROUS ONE SEEMS NOW STRONGER THAN E'ER BEFORE!

THE TASTE OF MY HUMILIATION AT THY HANDS THOSE MANY MONTHS AGO* IS STILL BITTER ON MY TONGUE, BALDER--

--BUT NOW SHALL VICTORY'S SCALES BE BALANCED!!

WHOMP!

* WAY BACK IN JOURNEY INTO MYSTERY #117. --LEN.

'TIS DONE?

IN BUT A MOMENT, FAIR ONE-- AYE!

'TWILL BE DONE FOR ALL TIME!!

WHILE COUNTLESS LIGHT-YEARS AWAY, AT THE FURTHEST EDGE OF A GALAXY WHOSE NAME HAS BEEN LOST TO THE AGES...

FOR FAR TOO LONG HAVE WE SOUGHT THE MYSTERIOUS DOOMSDAY STAR TO NO AVAIL...

FOR ONCE, IT SEEMS FORTUNE HATH SMILED ON US, MY FRIENDS.

...BUT, USING THIS MAP THOU HAST CHARTED FOR US, FRIEND RECORDER, METHINKS WE SHALL AT LAST REACH OUR DESTINATION ERE...

BY ASGARD'S GLEAMING SPIRES! PRAY TELL ME MINE EAGLE'S EYES BETRAY ME!

SURELY I CANNOT SEE WHAT METHINKS I SEE!

OBSERVATION: YOUR VISION IS NOT FAULTY, VOLSTAGG, UNLESS WE ALL SHARE YOUR DELUSION...

...AND THE RECORDER CANNOT BE THUS DECEIVED!

FAITHFUL SIF'S THOUGHTS ECHO THE VAST ONE'S OWN, MY LOVE!

THEN FEAR NOT, FAIR ONE--FOR 'TIS NO NIGHTMARE THAT WAITS BEFORE US...

THEN PRITHEE EXPLAIN THIS NIGHTMARE, RECORDER!

...BUT MERELY A GREAT GALACTIC GRAVEYARD OF SOME SORT!!

WE SAIL THRU THE FINAL RESTING PLACE OF BEINGS LONG SINCE FORGOTTEN, SAVE FOR THESE TOWERING MONUMENTS TO THEIR PASSING!

CRIFF

THERE MAY BE NO *MENACE* HERE, BELOVED, BUT STILL THESE HUGE STONE FIGURES DOTH FILL ME WITH *DREAD*...

...AS IF THEY WERE *OMENS* OF SOME SORT, WARNING US *AWAY* FROM OUR *GOAL!*

METHINKS THINE IMAGINATION HATH *RUN AWAY* WITH THEE, MILADY.

THERE IS NAUGHT TO *THREATEN* US HERE AMIDST THESE LIFELESS... *EH?*

HEIMDALL'S EYES! THAT MONUMENT *BEHIND* US--IT *MOVES!?!*

AND NOW IT DOTH RAISE ITS MONSTROUS *HAND* AS IF TO...

ZZAAKK!

MEANWHILE...

THOU HAST FOUGHT THY *FINAL BATTLE,* BALDER!

NOW SHALT I *CRUSH* THEE LIKE THE INSIGNIFICANT *BEETLE* THAT THOU...

ZRAT!

AARRGGGH!!

'TIS THE SORCERY OF *KARNILLA,* BRUTISH ONE!

FE

THE SORCERY OF SHE WHO IS *QUEEN OF THE NORNS!!*

WHAT VILE *SORCERY* IS THIS??

I HAVE **PLANS** FOR THE NOBLE BALDER, MERCILESS ONE--

--AND I WILL BROOK NO **INTERFERENCE** FROM SUCH AS **THEE!**

BUT, BEING A WARRIOR OF SOME **WISDOM**, THE EXECUTIONER IS ALREADY DESPERATELY SEEKING **SHELTER** AGAINST THE NORN QUEEN'S SAVAGE **STORM**--

--SHELTER HE APPARENTLY DOES NOT **REQUIRE**, FOR KARNILLA'S SORCEROUS ASSAULT IS **DEFLECTED** ERE IT CAN **STRIKE**...

...BY ONE WHO IS NO **STRANGER** TO THE ARCANE ARTS **HERSELF!**

WOULD THAT THY **BLADE** WAS AS SWIFT AS THY **FEET**, BRUTISH ONE!

BATTLES ARE NOT WON BY **FLEEING** THEM!

MAYHAP 'TIS TIME I **SHOWED** THEE HOW TO **GAIN** OUR ULTIMATE **VICTORY!**

'TIS SOMETHING **I** WISH TO SEE AS WELL, VIXEN--

--SINCE KARNILLA'S **POWER** IS SECOND TO **NONE!**

BUT ALL THY POWER AMOUNTS TO **NAUGHT** BEFORE THE EXECUTIONER'S **TREACHERY**, WOMAN!

NOW, WHILST THINE ATTENTION IS FOCUSED ON MY ENCHANTING **COMPANION**...

...THE MOST **SAVAGE** WARRIOR OF ALL SHALL **STRIKE** WITHOUT **MERCY!!**

NAY, VARLET! NOW THAT I HAVE **RECOVERED** MY SENSES AND MY **WEAPON**--

--THY BATTLE IS WITH **ME!**'

UUGGHH!!

WHUMP!

WHILE BALDER **CONFRONTS** THE EXECUTIONER ONCE MORE, THE **BATTLE** BETWEEN THE NORN QUEEN AND THE ENCHANTRESS FAIRLY **SUNDERS** THE GROUND AND **IGNITES** THE MIDNIGHT SKY!

FOR A TIME WITHOUT **MEASURE**, THE CONFLICT **CONTINUES**, WITH NEITHER ADVERSARY GAINING A DECISIVE **ADVANTAGE**...

...AND PUTS AN ABRUPT **END** TO THIS NECROMANTIC COMBAT!!

BWOK!

...UNTIL, **UNSEEN** BY HER OPPONENT, KARNILLA SUBTLY **MANIPULATES** A BATTLE-TORN **ROCK SHARD**...

UUNNGH!!

NEEDEST THOU MINE **AID**, BALDER?

NAY, WITCH-WOMAN!

WITHOUT THE ENCHANTRESS TO **SUSTAIN** HIM, THE WEAKENED EXECUTIONER PROVIDED LITTLE **THREAT**!

MAYHAP THOU HAST DEFEATED THOSE TREACHEROUS **FOOLS**-- BUT THOU HAST YET TO DEAL WITH **ME**!!

WHO--?!?

BY ASGARD! IT... IT CANNOT **BE**!

BUT IT **IS**, CHURL! THE MIGHTY **THOR** HATH RETURNED AT LAST TO **ASGARD**--

--AND HE COMES SEEKING THINE UNWORTHY **LIVES**!!

IN STUNNED **SURPRISE**, BALDER AND THE NORN QUEEN **STARE** AT THE ANGRY-VISAGED FIGURE WHO **CONFRONTS** THEM...

...LITTLE KNOWING THAT, MYRAID WORLDS **AWAY,** THE RELENTLESS ASSAULT OF A MONSTROUS STONE **SENTINEL**...

...IS BEING REPULSED BY A **SECOND** GOD OF THUNDER!

ONCE AGAIN, MY MYSTIC MALLET **MJOLNIR** HATH TURNED ASIDE THE STONE GIANT'S **ONSLAUGHT**--

--BUT 'TIS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME ERE THE DEMON'S **FORCE-BOLTS** SHALL TEAR THIS VESSEL **ASUNDER!**

THE ODINSON SPEAKS **TRUE,** DASHING FANDRAL! HIS HAMMER ALONE CANNOT **SAVE** THE STAR-JAMMER!

BUT MAYHAP THE SPECIAL **WEAPONRY** SHE NOW CARRIES **CAN,** GRIM HOGUN!

AYE, DASHING ONE! WE MUST ACTIVATE THE **CRYO-CANNONS** ERE IT BE **TOO LATE!**

I ONLY HOPE WE HAVE LEARNED ENOUGH ABOUT THE **WORKING** OF THESE MECHANISMS THAT WE DO NOT **SAVE** YON MONSTER THE **BOTHER**--

--BY BLOWING **OURSELVES** ASUNDER!!

BUT EVEN AS FANDRAL THE DASHING INOBTRUSIVELY **CROSSES HIS FINGERS**, A BOLT OF SHIMMERING **ENERGY** LANCES FROM THE STARJAMMER'S **PROW**--

--ENVELOPING THE TOWERING GRANITE GUARDIAN IN A SHEATH OF **SUB-ZERO COLD** FAR MORE FRIGID THAN THE BITTER DEPTHS OF **SPACE!**

THE CRYO-CANNON'S NUMBING COLD IS *GREATER* THAN EVEN YON STONE *SENTINEL* CAN ENDURE!

EVEN NOW, THE MONSTROUS BEHEMOTH GROWS *STIFF*, UNABLE TO *MOVE*-- ITS GRANITE FORM GROWS *BRITTLE*--!

AND, ERE IT CAN SOMEHOW *ADAPT* ITSELF TO ITS NEW SITUATION--

--THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL *STRIKE* WITH RIGHTEOUS FURY!!

KRAKADOOM

* YEAH, WE *KNOW* THERE IS NO *SOUND* IN SPACE, BUT HOW COULD WE PASS UP A SOUND EFFECT LIKE *THIS* ONE? -- LIVELY LEN.

WE MUST MOVE *SWIFTLY*, GOOD COMRADES! WITHOUT THE MYSTIC PROTECTION OF THE *STARJAMMER*, EVEN THE MIGHTY *THOR* CANNOT LONG *SURVIVE* THE RIGORS OF DEEP SPACE!

THEN THANK THE FATES THESE *ROCKET-JETS* WE INSTALLED SERVE ALMOST AS WELL AS OUR NOW-TATTERED *SAIL*!

*AND EVEN AS THE RENOVATED STAR-CRAFT PULLS *ALONGSIDE* THE DRIFTING THUNDER GOD...*

GET THEE *ABOARD*, FRIEND THOR-- AND WE SHALL *CONTINUE* OUR QUEST FOR THY *FATHER*!

NAY, GOOD FANDRAL-- METHINKS OUR QUEST BE *OVER*!

IN ODIN'S NAME, MILORD--*WHAT*--?!?

BEHOLD YON SMOLDERING *STAR*, MY FRIENDS--YON SEETHING ORB THAT SEEMS TO CAST SMOTHERING *SHADOWS*, INSTEAD OF A TRUE STAR'S *LIGHT*!

THE ALL-WISE *MIMIR* HATH SAID 'TWOULD BE THUS WHEN, AT LAST, WE REACHED OUR *GOAL*!

AYE, GOOD COMRADES, METHINKS ONLY YON PLANET-SPANNING *BARRICADE* DOTH STAND NOW 'TWIXT *US* AND THE ALMIGHTY *ODIN*--

--FOR THE SO-CALLED *STAR* THAT SHINES BEFORE US NOW IS, IN TRUTH, THE DREADED-- **DOOMSDAY STAR!!**

NEXT ISSUE: THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS LEARN THAT FINDING THE *DOOMSDAY STAR* AND FINDING THE LONG-MISSING *ODIN* ARE TWO ENTIRELY *DIFFERENT* THINGS, FOR FIRST THEY MUST PENETRATE...

THE WALL AROUND THE WORLD!

BE HERE!

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THE MIGHTY

THOR ®

FLEE, THUNDER GOD! THERE IS NO HOPE OF DEFEATING OUR ARMORED FOES!!

NAY, MY FRIEND! THE SON OF ODIN SHALL STAND HIS GROUND-- OR PERISH LIKE A WARRIOR BORN!!

IN THE SHADOW OF THE DOOMSDAY STAR!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

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Len Wein WRITER/EDITOR | Walt Simonson & Ernie Chan ILLUSTRATORS SUPREME | Glynis Wein COLORIST | Annette K. LETTERER

THEY HAVE COME FAR, THESE VALIANT SOULS--PAST WORLDS BEYOND NUMBERING, TO THE FURTHEST EDGES OF THE UNIVERSE, IN SEARCH OF THE LONG-MISSING ODIN, MONARCH OF IMMORTAL ASGARD!
WE ARE BESIEGED, GOOD COMRADES--BY A BATTERY OF PHOTON-BLASTERS!
OH, WOULDST THAT VALOROUS VOLSTAGG WERE NOT SUCH A TEMPTING TARGET!
NOW, AT LAST, IT SEEMS THEIR LENGTHY QUEST MAY SOON BE OVER--FOR THERE IS BUT ONE FINAL OBSTACLE WHICH STANDS BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR GOAL!

UNFORTUNATELY, THIS MONSTROUS OBSTACLE IS...

THE WALL AROUND THE WORLD!

CANST THOU NOT DO SOMETHING TO AVERT THE DISASTER BURSTING ABOUT US, GRIM HOGUN?

NAY, VAST ONE! THERE BE NAUGHT AMONGST ALL OUR NEWFOUND WEAPONRY* THAT CAN PROTECT THE STARJAMMER AGAINST SUCH AWESOME POWER!

* WEAPONRY OBTAINED FROM THE PIRATE STARSHIP BIRD OF PREY LAST ISSUE. --LIVELY LEN.

THEN WE MUST *RELY* ON THAT WHICH HAS SERVED US *WELL*, MY FRIENDS--

--THE *STRENGTH* OF OUR IMMORTAL *SINEWS!!*

THRAK!

SWIFTLY, GRIM HOGUN--TO THE *HELM!* IF WE CANNOT PASS *THRU* YON BARRICADE...

...MAYHAP WE CAN PASS *ABOVE* IT!

AS THOU *COMMANDEST*, NOBLE THOR!

EXPERTLY, THE DOUR ASGARDIAN TAKES THE MYSTIC STAR-JAMMER'S *TILLER*--

--AND THE REMARKABLE STARCRAFT STREAKS *THRU* THE PHOTON FUSILLADE, *OVER* THE GREAT GOLDEN WALL...

...AND STRAIGHT *INTO* THE HEART OF A SOUL-SHATTERING *CATACLYSM!*

HEIMDALL'S EYES! THE AREA *ABOVE* THE BARRIER IS PROTECTED BY PERPETUAL *METEOR STORMS!*

HARD ABOUT, HOGUN!

TO REMAIN *HERE* IS TO INVITE OUR OWN *DESTRUCTION!*

MAYHAP WE WILL FIND SAFER PASSAGE *BELOW* THE WALL!

BUT BENEATH THE WORLD-SPANNING BARRICADE, THE DESPERATE ASGARDIANS FIND...

A CELESTIAL MAELSTROM!!

SWIRLING FORCES OF COSMIC PROPORTIONS THAT CAN TEAR THIS SHIP ASUNDER IN AN INSTANT!

AS THEY ALREADY WOULD HAVE, FRIEND THOR, HAD DASHING FANDRAL NOT STRAINED OUR WEAPONRY TO ITS LIMITS--

--BY PROJECTING A TEMPORARY FORCE-FIELD ABOUT OUR VESSEL UNTIL WE CAN SAIL IT TO SAFETY!

AND WHEN THE STAR-JAMMER ONCE MORE HOVERS BEFORE THE GOLDEN WALL...

SINCE THERE DOTH BE NO SAFE PASSAGE ABOVE THIS BARRICADE OR BENEATH IT--

--THEN, IN ODIN'S NAME, WE MUST GO THRU IT!!

FOR THERE IS NOTHING IN ALL THE UNIVERSE THAT SHALL STAY US FROM FINDING MY FATHER!

OBSERVATION: NEVER HAVE I SEEN THE THUNDER GOD MORE DETERMINED, MORE FILLED WITH RIGHTEOUS FURY!

CONCLUSION: I WOULD NEVER WISH TO BE THE ENEMY OF THE MIGHTY THOR!

AYE, RECORDER. IN ALL THE REALM ETERNAL, THERE BE NO ONE MORE GENTLE THAN HE...

...OR MORE DANGEROUS!

THEN, HIS JAW GRIMLY SET, THE GOLDEN-HAIRED GOD OF THUNDER **STRIKES** THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR **TWICE** UPON THE STAR-JAMMER'S DECK, **RAISES** HIS MIGHTY WEAPON OVER HIS HEAD...

...AND HIS COMPANIONS WATCH IN STUNNED SILENCE AS THE COSMIC FORCES WHICH, MOMENTS BEFORE, HAD SOUGHT TO **DESTROY** THEM, SEEMINGLY **BEND** TO THE MIGHTY THOR'S **COMMAND!**

HEAR ME, THOU HOWLING STELLAR WINDS! **HEED** THE VOICE OF THY GIVEN **LORD AND MASTER!**

FOR, THOUGH THOU ART TOO **POWERFUL** FOR EVEN THOR TO **TAME**--

--STILL CAN I **TAP** THY LIMITLESS ENERGIES, AND **FEED** THEM TO THIS **HAMMER** IN MY HAND--

--UNTIL THE ENCHANTED **MJOLNIR** DOTH POSSESS CELESTIAL **STRENGTH** ENOUGH--

"--TO **DESTROY** THIS CURSED **BARRICADE!!**"

KRAKA-BOOM!

BY ASGARD'S GLEAMING SPIRES! NE'ER BEFORE HAVE I STRUCK A BLOW SO POTENT--

--YET YON BARRIER HATH BARELY BEEN BREACHED!

THEN I MUST NEEDS CONTINUE MINE ASSAULT, STRIKING AGAIN AND YET AGAIN, UNTIL...

BUT THE THUNDER GOD'S SENTENCE GOES UNFINISHED...

... FOR HE AND HIS COMPANIONS HAVE SOMEHOW VANISHED IN THE BLINK OF AN EYE!

WHILE, A UNIVERSE AWAY, A HOODED FIGURE WITNESSES THE VALIANT BAND'S DISAPPEARANCE-- AND SMILES A CONTENTED SMIRK.

IT APPEARS EVERYTHING IS GOING PRECISELY AS PLANNED!

WITHIN MINUTES, THOR AND HIS COMRADES WILL HAVE PERISHED...

...ASSUMING, OF COURSE, THEY HAVE NOT BEEN SLAIN ALREADY...

...AND ONCE BALDER AND THE CURSED NORN QUEEN HAVE BEEN DEALT WITH--

--THERE SHALL BE NOTHING THAT CAN STAND BETWEEN ME AND MY GOAL!

I--I DO NOT UNDERSTAND, MILORD.

THE FACE ON THE VIEWSCREEN IS CONFUSED, BUT RESPECTFUL...

...WHICH IS ONLY **PROPER**, WHEN ONE STANDS BEFORE THE **PRINCE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD!**

WHAT IS THERE TO *UNDER-STAND*, BALDER?

I DID CHARGE THEE TO *PROTECT* THE REALM ETERNAL...

...AND THOU HAST *FAILED* IN THY GIVEN *TASK!*

BUT, MILORD, DID THE NORN QUEEN AND I NOT *DEFEAT* THE DREADED *ENCHANTRESS* AND *EXECUTIONER*, THEY WHO *LED* THE SILENT ARMY THAT HAD *THREATENED* THE REALM?*

SO IT WOULD *APPEAR*, BALDER --UNTIL THOU DOST STUDY THY VICTIMS MORE *CLOSELY.*

*LAST ISH, RIGHT? -- LEN.

FOR *THEN* THOU WOULDST SEE THOU HADST DEFEATED NO MORE THAN MERE *PHANTASMS!*

BY ODIN! OUR FOES HAVE *VANISHED!*

AYE, BALDER, AS IF THEY HAVE NEVER *BEEN*-- FOR, IN TRUTH, THEY NEVER *WERE!*

MILORD, I AM SUCH A *FOOL!*

NAY, BRAVE ONE...

...THOU WERT MERELY A *VICTIM* OF FORCES BEYOND THY *KEN.*

THERE BE SOMETHING MOST *ODD* HERE!

HAD OUR FOES BEEN MERELY *ILLUSIONS*, I WOULD CERTAINLY HAVE *SENSED* IT!

METHINKS THERE IS *MORE* TO THIS THAN EASILY MEETS THE EYE!

AND, AS THE SORCERESS CALLED KARNILLA CONTINUES HER MUSINGS...

NOW COME *SWIFTLY*, MY FRIENDS! THE *TRUE* FOE AWAITS *WITHIN* THE CITY *GATES!*

FURIOUSLY, THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS COMPANIONS **RACE** TOWARDS THE GLEAMING GOLDEN SPIRES OF ASGARD'S **CITY IMPERIAL**...

...WHILE, MYRIAD LIGHT-YEARS DISTANT, **ANOTHER** THUNDER GOD AND **HIS** COMPANIONS LIE SPRAWLED UPON A CRUMBLING **ROOFTOP**, IN THE VERY **HEART** OF A CITY WHOSE **GOLDEN SPIRES** HAVE LONG SINCE GROWN RUTTED AND **RUINED**--

--A CITY THAT SEEMS TO STRETCH ON WITHOUT **ENDING**, TO THE **HORIZON** AND BEYOND, UNTIL IT HAS **COVERED** THE ENTIRE **SURFACE** OF THE WORLD THAT HAS COME TO BE CALLED THE DREADED-- **DOOMSDAY STAR!**

FOR A TIME, THE ADVENTUROUS ASGARDIANS LIE UNCONSCIOUS, **UNMOVING**...

...THEN, IN AN INSTANT, THEY ARE **AWAKE** ONCE MORE!

ART THOU **WELL**, MILADY SIF?

AS WELL AS CAN BE **EXPECTED**, MY LOVE--CONSIDERING OUR **CIRCUMSTANCES!**

WHERE IS THE **STARJAMMER**, THOR? AND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WHERE ARE **WE**?

STANDING DEEP WITHIN SOME VAST DESERTED **CITY**, IT DOTH SEEM.

AND WHAT IS **MORE**, MY FRIENDS-- STANDING **BEHIND** THE TOWERING **WALL** AROUND THIS WORLD!

AYE, DASHING FANDRAL-- WITH *THAT* CAN VALIANT VOLSTAGG HEARTILY *AGREE!*

EVEN AS I FEAR I MUST *DISAGREE* WITH THE WORDS OF THE NOBLE *THOR!*

FOR, THOUGH THIS ANCIENT CITY MAY *INDEED* BE DEEP AND *VAST*...

"...B-B-BY NO MEANS IS IT *DESERTED!!*"

TARGET SPOTTED DEAD AHEAD!

DO YOU **FEEL** IT, BROTHER? THE **NOBILITY** THEY RADIATE? THE SHEER **POWER?**

THEY CERTAINLY DO **SEEM** *TARGETS WORTHY OF OUR* **WORSHIP,** *BROTHER!*

BUT THERE IS ONLY ONE WAY TO **PROVE** *THEIR WORTH!*

AT MY **COMMAND,** *BROTHERS...*

...FIRE!!

WHOOM!

WHOOM!

DEFEND THY-SELVES, GOOD WARRIORS!

YON ARMOR-CLAD INTRUDERS DOTH SEEK TO DESTROY US!

KRA-RAMM!!

BELOVED, OUR LOFTY PERCH DOTH CRUMBLE ABOUT US!!

THEN GIVE ME THY HAND, FAIR ONE--

--AND I SHALL CARRY THEE TO SAFETY!

QUERY: ARE YOU INJURED, MY FRIENDS?

NAY, RECORDER, THIS STURDY LEDGE--PLUS MINE OWN FABLED AGILITY--DID SERVE TO BREAK THE FALL.

AYE, VAST ONE--BUT IT ALSO SERVED TO SEPARATE US FROM OUR COMRADES!

BUT MAYHAP 'TIS FOR THE BEST, GRIM HOGUN! THIS WAY, PERCHANCE, WE CAN TRAP THE ENEMY BETWEEN US!

AND SINCE OUR ARMORED ADVERSARIES DOTH DRAW FAR TOO THREATENINGLY NEAR, METHINKS THE TIME HATH COME...

"...TO STRIKE!!"

THRA-KOOM!

NE'ER HATH HOGUN'S BLUDGEONING *MACE* REQUIRED AN *INVITATION* TO BATTLE, THUNDER GOD!

IT DOTH SEEK NO MORE THAN THE BITTER TASTE OF *BLOOD*--AND, ERE THIS CONFLICT IS *DONE*, IT SHALL *HAVE* IT!

THRAK!

DECLARATION: IT IS MY TASK MERELY TO *RECORD* WHATEVER I *OBSERVE*--

--BUT I CANNOT ALLOW SUCH VALIANT ALLIES TO BATTLE *ALONE!*

QUERY: WILL YOU NOT FACE OUR FOES *WITH* ME, VOLSTAGG?

WHAT? AND DENY *THEE* THE SWEET TASTE OF *VICTORY*, RECORDER?

HOW COULDST THOU EVEN *SUGGEST* SUCH A THING?

IS IT NOT **GLORIOUS**, BROTHER? THE ASGARDIANS ARE ALL WE COULD HAVE **EXPECTED** THEM TO BE...

...AND **MORE!**

AYE, BROTHER! OUR **TECHNO-TRACKERS** ALONE HAVEN'T A PRAYER OF **OVERCOMING** THEM!

WE MUST EMPLOY THE **COSMOTRONIC CANNON**... EVEN THOUGH ITS UNCHECKED POWER CAN TEAR THIS WORLD **ASUNDER!!**

SWIFTLY, MILADY--HIE THYSELF TO **SHELTER!** OUR FOES DOTH WIELD WEAPONRY FAR MORE *MONSTROUS* THAN I COULD E'ER HAVE *IMAGINED!*

NAY, MY LOVE! I *TOO* AM AN ASGARDIAN BORN--AND I SHALL *FIGHT* LIKE ONE!

BUT EVEN AS THE FIERY-EYED GODDESS WHIRLS TO **FACE** HER ARMORED OPPONENTS, THE **COSMOTRONIC CANNON** IS AIMED...

...AND FIRED!

THE RESULT OF THAT INCREDIBLE WEAPON'S SINGLE OUTBURST IS MOST AWESOME TO BEHOLD!

FOR COUNTLESS MILES IN EVERY DIRECTION, THE GROUND TREMBLES LIKE SOME FRIGHTENED CHILD--

--THE CITY'S TOWERING STRUCTURES ALL SHUDDER, THEN SWAY LIKE HELPLESS REEDS CAUGHT IN A STORM...

...UNTIL, AT LAST, UNABLE TO WITHSTAND THE STRAIN ANY LONGER, GREAT FISSURES OPEN IN THE BUILDINGS' SIDES...

...AND THEY FALL!

BY HELA! WE ARE UNDONE!

TIME STOPS! FOR THERE IS NOWHERE THESE BOLD ADVENTURERS CAN RUN, NOTHING THEY CAN POSSIBLY DO TO SAVE THEMSELVES!

IN AN INSTANT, THEY ARE LOST BENEATH THE THUNDERING AVALANCHE THAT PLUNGES DOWN, DOWN--PAST LEVEL AFTER LEVEL OF THE DYING CITY...

...UNTIL IT FINALLY COMES TO REST IN SMOKING RUINS IN THE CITY'S MOST DISMAL DEPTHS--

--A SHATTERED PILE OF RUBBLE AND ROCK THAT IS NOT AT ALL A FITTING TOMB FOR SUCH BOLD AND DARING MEN!

VOLSTAGG! HOGUN! RECORDER! FRIEND THOR, ARE THEY...?

AYE, FANDRAL-- BUT THERE IS NAUGHT THAT WE CAN *DO* FOR OUR FALLEN COMRADES...

...SAVE TO MAKE THE FIENDS *RESPONSIBLE* PAY MOST DEARLY FOR THEIR *DEATHS*!!

"NOT LIGHTLY IS THE MYSTIC MALLET *MJOLNIR* CALLED ALSO THE *DESTROYER*--

KROOM!

"--AND ONCE MY FAITHFUL WEAPON DOTH RETURN TO MINE *HAND*, I SHALL..."

BY THE NORNS! 'TIS NOT *POSSIBLE*--!!

MY HAMMER DID NOT *RETURN* TO ME!!

I KNOW NOT WHAT *SORCERY* THOU DIDST EMPLOY, KNAVES, TO KEEP MIGHTY MJOLNIR *FROM* ME!

BUT IF THOU DIDST THINK THUS TO *DEFEAT* ME--

SKRAM!

--THOU WERT SADLY *MISTAKEN*!!

ALL THINE ARMORED *POWER* IS NO *MATCH* FOR THE INCOMPARABLE *STRENGTH* WHICH IS THOR'S *BIRTH-RIGHT*!

AND NOW, WITH MY HAMMER ONCE MORE IN *HAND*, THERE IS...

HELP ME, THOR!!

BY ODIN! THAT DOTH BE *MILADY'S* VOICE!

BEWARE, MY LOVE! FOR DASHING FANDRAL HATH BEEN LAID LOW, AND I AM BUT A HELPLESS PRISONER!

THE FATE OF OUR NOBLE QUEST, GOOD THOR, DOTH REST NOW IN THINE HANDS ALONE!

PRITHEE, MILADY, HAVE FAITH FOR BUT A MOMENT...

...AND THE HAMMER OF THOR SHALL FREE THEE FROM THY MONSTROUS IMPRISONMENT!

FURIOUSLY, THE THUNDER GOD CHARGES FORWARD, HIS ATTENTION RIVETED SOLELY ON HIS TRUE LOVE'S PLIGHT...

...WHICH IS, IN ITS FASHION, REALLY MOST UNFORTUNATE!

FSZAK!

AARRGGHH!!

THOR? I PRAY THEE, BELOVED-- SPEAK TO ME!

THE THUNDER GOD IS BEYOND SPEECH NOW!

THEN THE BATTLE AT LAST IS OVER!

DARKNESS SWELLS AND EBBS LIKE A SHADOWY TIDE, CARRYING THE SON OF ODIN ACROSS AN ETERNAL SEA-- UNTIL, AT LAST, HE IS WASHED UP ON THE LONELY SHORE CALLED CONSCIOUSNESS...

WH-WHERE... AM... I?

WHAT HAST THOU DONE TO ME--AND TO MY FAITHFUL COMRADES?

SPEAK, I COMMAND THEE-- ANSWER ME!

All of your questions will be answered in due time, my lord Thor.

For now, all you need know is that you are among those who are sworn to worship you all the rest of your days.

At the moment, for want of a better name, you may call us ...the SOUL-SURVIVORS!

AMID THE RUINS OF BATTLE, ALL IS **SILENT** FOR A TIME...

...UNTIL A GREAT STONE SLAB ABRUPTLY **HEAVES**...

...AND TOPPLES **FORWARD!**

OBSERVATION: WE HAVE **SURVIVED** OUR SEEMING **DEATH-PLUNGE!**

AYE, RECORDER! BUT HADST THOU NOT **CALCULATED** THE SINGLE SPOT WHERE WE WOULD BE **PROTECTED** FROM THE FALLING RUBBLE, 'TWOULD NOT BE **SO!**

AYE, MY FRIENDS--FOR THEN VALOROUS VOLSTAGG WOULD HAVE BEEN FORCED TO REVEAL HIS **OWN** INGENIOUS PLAN FOR OUR SALVATION!

DECLARATION: IT IS FORTUNATE THAT WAS NOT **NECESSARY.**

INDEED, RECORDER... **INDEED.**

NOW **COME,** VAST ONE! OUR FRIENDS AND OUR FOES HAVE ALL **VANISHED--**

--AND 'TIS UP TO **US** TO PROVIDE OUR COMRADES **RESCUE!**

BE **PATIENT,** GRIM ONE. GENIUS CANNOT BE **HURRIED.**

THEN I PRAY THEE, "GENIUS", TO **TELL** US HOW WE SHALL **ASCEND** YON GLEAMING **TOWER!**

FOR, OF ALL THE **STRUCTURES** IN THIS DESOLATE WORLD, 'TIS **THERE** I WAGER WE SHALL **FIND** OUR MISSING **COMRADES...**

...OR ELSE WE SHALL SURELY FIND OUR **DEATHS!!**

NEXT ISSUE: THE QUEST FOR ODIN **ENDS** IN UNEXPECTED **TRAGEDY!** THE STORY IS CALLED...

EVEN AN IMMORTAL CAN DIE!

NEED WE SAY--**BE HERE!**

THOR ®

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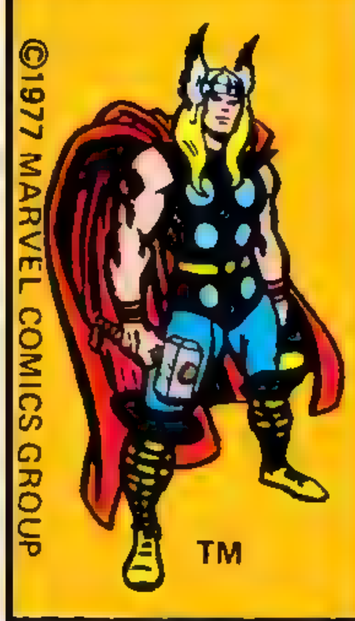
EVEN AN IMMORTAL CAN DIE!



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THE MIGHTY THOR®

B/6

THE THUNDER GOD GOES BERSERK TO AVENGE THE DEATH OF ONE HE LOVES... BUT WHO??

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

EVEN AN IMMORTAL CAN DIE!

HE HAD COME TO THIS APTLY-NAMED **DOOMS-DAY STAR** WITH HIS FIVE CLOSEST **FRIENDS** AT HIS SIDE, IN SEARCH OF OMNIPOTENT **ODIN**, MOST REGAL MONARCH OF IMMORTAL **ASGARD**, AND HIS OWN LOVING **FATHER**.

BUT ALL THE FURIOUS THUNDER GOD HAS **FOUND** HERE THUS FAR IS OVERWHELMING **FAILURE**... AND THE GRISLY SPECTER OF **DEATH!**

I SHALL NOT TELL THEE **AGAIN**, SOUL-SURVIVORS-- **RELEASE ME!!**

It is **FOOLISH** to strain against your **BONDS**, my lord Thor.

You are held **CAPTIVE** by a living power far **GREATER** than your own.

LEN WEIN ✳ WALT SIMONSON & TONY DeZUNIGA
WRITER/EDITOR — ILLUSTRATORS

GLYNIS WEIN — COLORIST

JOE ROSEN — LETTERER

NAY, ALIEN! WE HAVE TRAVELED ACROSS THE COSMOS, BATTLED FOES BEYOND NUMBERING, ALL TO REACH THIS DESOLATE WORLD!

BEFORE MINE EYES, MY GOOD COMRADES-- HOGUN, VOLSTAGG, AND THE RECORDER-- DID SACRIFICE THEIR LIVES THAT WE MIGHT FIND THE ALMIGHTY ODIN ONCE MORE! *

AND, BY ALL THE FATES, I SWEAR TO THEE--

...IT SHALL NOT HAVE BEEN...

*LAST ISH. --LEN.

...IN VAIN.

FORGIVE ME, MY FRIENDS. AGAIN I HAVE... FAILED THEE.

On the CONTRARY, my lord THOR. You have not FAILED.

In fact, each new display of your awesome STRENGTH only makes us think all the more HIGHLY of you.

Indeed, what we were TOLD of your power does not adequately BEGIN to describe it.

Truly, Thunder God, you will make a considerable CONTRIBUTION to our continued SURVIVAL.

Please, K'rll, I wish you would choose your words more CAREFULLY.

There is no need to TEASE the Asgardian.

THY SILENCE WOULD TEASE ME FAR MORE THAN THY WORDS, ALIEN. I PRAY THEE-- SAY ON!

I WOULD KNOW MORE OF THEE--AND THIS WORLD THOU DOST CALL THE DOOMSDAY STAR!

If that is what you WISH, my lord.

K'rll, do you think it WISE?

Please, N'gll... step ASIDE.

Listen CLOSELY, Asgardian, and I shall paint you a PICTURE of the LIFE OF A WORLD...

...Aye, and of its DEATH!

Once this dismal DOOMSDAY STAR was but one of a great CONFEDERATION of planets...

...A brotherhood of bright and shining worlds, whose GLORY was such that it all but OVERWHELMED THE STARS...

"...And of those grand and glorious planets, this ONE shone the BRIGHTEST of all.

"We called this planet TEMPLEWORLD then, for it was HERE that the greatest TREASURES of all the Confederation were STORED--

"--In gleaming golden SHRINES that stretched like supplicating FINGERS toward the sky.

"But of those sacred treasures, there was one far GREATER than all the rest.

"He was called... THE ONE ABOVE ALL. We WORSHIPPED him.

"He was our GOD. He was LIFE, and the GIVER of life...

"...And I mean that quite LITERALLY.

"For we worshipped him as no other man or god BEFORE him had ever DREAMED of being ADORED...

"...And, in return, he gave FREELY of himself, his limitless STRENGTH flowing into the ENERGY-SIPHONS which supplied the POWER to keep our world ALIVE.

But our **PARADISE** could not last. Like huge metallic birds of prey, a vast **ARMADA** came screaming out of the skies one day, commanded by creatures whose only **PURPOSE** was to **DESTROY** that which they could not **UNDERSTAND.**

They were of different **RACES**...Skrull... Badoon...Aakon... Kree...but they spoke in **ONE VOICE**...

...and their **WORDS** were our Confederation's **EPITAPH!**

"Our **FELLOW** worlds perished **SWIFTLY**--but the way to **TEMPLEWORLD** was blocked at the **POLES** by perpetual **METEOR STORMS** and seething **STELLAR MAELSTROMS**...

...And to defend the band of passage about our planet's **MIDDLE**, the One Above All constructed a massive **WALL** around our world--

"--and sealed us **SAFE!**

"But the alien armada would not be **PUT OFF.** To their last vessel, they **ASSAULTED** the gleaming barricade...

"...And to their last vessel, they were **DESTROYED!**

"But our **OWN** loss was far **GREATER**--for, in constructing the planet-spanning **WALL**, the One Above All had somehow **EXHAUSTED** his life-giving **ENERGIES.**

"Despite our fervent **PLEADING**, our beloved God at last **PERISHED**...and we constructed a great stone **COFFIN** to contain his blessed remains.

"It was to be but the first of **MANY.**

"For, without the One Above All to **SUSTAIN** us, we were forced to construct our **OWN** armada, so that we could seek out **OTHER** Gods to fulfill our planet's **NEEDS.**

"Though many of us lost our **LIVES** in the searching, one after another, new Gods were **FOUND**... and worshipped until they **PERISHED**...and then each was **ENSHRINED** in love and glory.

"Our **LATEST** Godhead was acquired almost by **ACCIDENT**, actually... intercepted as he was in **TRANSIT** between **WORLDS.**

"And, in truth, he is one of the most **POWERFUL** of all who have been chosen to keep our dream **ALIVE.**"

But now, alas, even **HIS** awesome energies have begun to **DWINDLE** to a dangerous **LOW.**

Soon, the time will come for him to be **REPLACED**... which makes your **PRESENCE** here most **FORTUNATE.**

NAY, ALIEN! NEVER SHALL I... ***EH?***

MY SHACKLES HATH BEEN ***LOOSED*** FROM THEIR PEDESTAL?!

I trust you are more **COMFORTABLE** now, my lord Thor?

Then you will please **FOLLOW** me.

We are not **BARBARIANS**, Asgardians. You have all traveled impossibly far for a great and noble **PURPOSE.**

Before it is **TOO LATE**, your single-minded perseverance should be **REWARDED.**

BEYOND THE GLEAMING TOWER WHERE THOR AND HIS COMPANIONS ARE HELD **CAPTIVE**--

--ALL THAT **REMAINS** UPON THE PLANET CALLED THE DOOMSDAY STAR ARE DEAD AND DESOLATE **RUINS**...

...AND **AMID** THOSE RUINS, THREE FIGURES THOUGHT **DEAD** BY THE THUNDER GOD CAREFULLY CONSIDER THEIR NEXT **MOVE**.

SOMEHOW, GOOD COMRADES, WE MUST GET **INSIDE** YON GOLDEN TOWER!

SURELY THOU ART NOT **SERIOUS**, GRIM HOGUN?!

OBSERVATION: SINCE THAT IS WHERE OUR FRIENDS ARE HELD **HOSTAGE**, WE HAVE NO OTHER **CHOICE!**

QUERY: ARE YOU **FRIGHTENED**, VOLSTAGG?

NAY, RECORDER--VALOROUS VOLSTAGG KNOWETH NOT THE **MEANING** OF FEAR.

BUT WHY MUST WE **RUSH** INTO A DOMAIN WHERE **DEATH** LURKS ABOUT EVERY CORNER?

BECAUSE WE ARE SWORN TO **FREE** OUR BROTHERS-AT-ARMS, AND WE MUST...

EH?

ANOTHER OF THE ALIENS' DREADED **TECHNO-TRACKERS** DRAWS NEAR!

HAVE OUR FOES RETURNED TO **RENEW** THEIR ATTACK?

OBSERVATION: MY DERMA-CIRCUITS CAN DETECT **NO** LIVING BEING WITHIN THE MECHANISM.

CONCLUSION: IT IS MERELY A **DRONE**-- DISPATCHED TO DISPOSE OF OUR **REMAINS.**

"**STATEMENT:** BEWARE, MY FRIENDS--IT HAS DETECTED OUR **PRESENCE!**

"**WARNING:** IT IS PREPARING TO **STRIKE!**"

AND IT HATH MADE THE **RECORDER** ITS FIRST **VICTIM!**

HAVE **FAITH**, RIGILLIAN-- AND MINE ANGRY MACE SHALL SET THEE **FREE!**

WHEN THOU DOST **STRIKE**, HOGUN, STRIKE ONCE IN **VOLSTAGG'S** NAME AS WELL!

AND WHILST THOU DOST **BATTLE**, THE EAGLE OF WARRIORS SHALL KEEP **WATCH**...

...LEST *ANOTHER* OF THESE MONSTROSITIES SHOULD CATCH US *UNAWARE*...

SPANG!

WWUURRFF!!

BY THE FATES!!

SKRAK!

THAT HEINOUS MONSTER DID PLANT ITS SNAKE-LIKE *LIMB* IN MY PATH TO *UPEND* ME!

OBSERVATION: IT APPEARED TO *ME* THAT VOLSTAGG STUMBLED BLINDLY INTO THE *TECHNO-TRACKER'S* PATH!

AS IT SEEMED TO *ME* AS WELL, MY FRIEND!

BUT *HOWEVER* THE VOLUMINOUS ONE MANAGED THE MINOR MIRACLE OF *TOPPLING* THIS MACHINE, THE RESULT IS STILL THE *SAME!*

IT HATH LEFT THE TECHNO-TRACKER'S MOST VULNERABLE AREA *OPEN* TO MY MOST SAVAGE *ASSAULT!*

THOU HAST NO NEED TO *THANK* ME, HOGUN!

KRA-KOOM

MY *SATISFACTION* DOTH BE THE KNOWLEDGE OF A JOB *WELL DONE!*

WHILE, WITHIN THE GOLDEN ***TOWER*** *...*

WHITHER ART THOU *TAKING* US, ALIEN?

Where have you been **LONGING** to go, my dear Lady Sif.

Within the temple before us, your **QUEST** shall find its **ENDING.**

THE GOLDEN-HAIRED GOD OF THUNDER STARES INTO THE YAWNING CHAMBER ***BEFORE*** *HIM, AND SUDDENLY HE CAN FIND NO WORDS TO* ***SPEAK*** *...*

N-NAY.

...FOR HE KNOWS THE PALLID CREATURE CALLED K'RLL SPOKE **TRUE**, THAT HIS QUEST AT LAST IS TRULY **OVER!**

BEFORE HIM, WITHIN A REPLICA OF A GREAT NORSE **FUNERAL BARGE**, A MIGHTY FIGURE SITS A GLOWING **THRONE** AS IF HE WERE **BORN** TO IT-- WHICH, IN A WAY, HE **WAS.**

AND EVEN AS THE MIGHTY THOR **WATCHES**, HE CAN SWEAR HE SEES THE LIVING ENERGY-- THE VERY **LIFE-FORCE**-- BEING **DRAWN** FROM THE GREY-MANED BODY, WHICH IS ALMOST **MORE** THAN THE ANGUISHED THUNDER GOD CAN **BEAR.**

YOU SEE, THE MAJESTIC FIGURE WHO SITS THIS HUNGRY THRONE IS **ODIN**, MONARCH MOST HIGH OF IMMORTAL **ASGARD**, LORD LIEGE OF THE REALM ETERNAL. HE IS THE HEARTSICK THOR'S **FATHER**...

...AND, WHAT IS MORE, HE IS **DYING!**

KNAVES! CHURLS! RELEASE MY LIEGE-- IMMEDIATELY!!

COULD I BUT SUNDER THESE CURSED SHACKLES, THOU WOULDST PAY FOR THIS INDIGNITY!

CALM THYSELF, MY LOVE! THERE BE NAUGHT THAT THOU CANST DO!

VERILY, THE MIGHTY THOR DOTH BE HIS SIRE'S SON. HE HATH FOUND ME AS WELL I KNEW HE WOULD.

MAYHAP NOW FATE'S COLD SCALES SHALL TIP IN OUR BALANCE AT LAST!

THE FAIR LADY SIF SPEAKS TRULY, FRIEND THOR. AT LEAST WE KNOW NOW THAT THE ALL-FATHER DOTH YET LIVE!

METHINKS THAT MUST BE ENOUGH... FOR THE NONCE.

HEED THE DASHING FANDRAL, BELOVED. WE MUST BIDE OUR TIME.

AYE, MILADY, SO IT SEEMS. BUT 'TWILL BE HARD... MOST HARD.

Their determination is truly INSPIRING, is it not, N'gll? A shame it will AVAIL them not at...

Ah... K'rll... I suggest you check this MONITOR before you continue your paeans of praise.

Even as we SPEAK, the three ASGARDIANS we thought dead are SCALING this tower.

Eh?

They are indeed a most IMPRESSIVE breed, N'gll. Well, let them CONTINUE their climb.

IF they SUCCEED, perhaps they shall PROVE themselves worthy of our WORSHIP.

EVEN MINE OMNIPOTENT ENERGIES CANNOT SURVIVE THIS CONSTANT DRAINING MUCH LONGER, BUT IF WHAT YON ALIENS HATH SAID BE TRUE...

...THEN THERE DOTH YET REMAIN A WAY TO OUR SALVATION!

AND WHILE THE **MONARCH** OF ASGARD PREPARES HIS FINAL GAMBIT, MYRIAD WORLDS AWAY, THE **REALM** HE RULES STILL SUFFERS UNDER **SIEGE**--

--EVEN AS THREE BOLD FIGURES RACE TO **SAVE** THE GOLDEN CITY...

...AMONG THEM, A **SECOND** GOD OF THUNDER!

THE **STREETS** OF THIS SECTION DOTH SEEM UNCOMMONLY **QUIET**, ODINSON.

ART THOU CERTAIN THOU DOST LEAD US **A'RIGHT**, FRIEND THOR?

I ASSURE THEE, BALDER--I KNOW PRECISELY WHAT I AM **DOING!**

I DID PROMISE TO SHOW THEE THE **TRUE** FOE OF THE REALM... AND, VERILY, I **HAVE!**

THUS FAR, THOU HAST SHOWN US NAUGHT BUT **PHANTOMS**, THUNDER GOD!

KARNILLA SPEAKS **TRULY**, MILORD. I SEE NO **FOE** BEFORE US!

THAT, THOU MOST MONUMENTAL **FOOL**, IS BECAUSE THOU DOST NOT KNOW WHERE TO **LOOK**!!

THROK!

AARRGGHH!!

I KNOW NOT WHAT **MADNESS** DOTH POSSESS THEE, VARLET--

--BUT FOR DARING TO **HARM** THE NOBLE **BALDER**...

...THY VERY LIFE IS **FORFEIT!!**

TRULY, THY POWERS ARE **AWESOME**, NORN QUEEN...

...BUT **MINE** ARE GREATER **STILL!!**

AND EVEN AS THE LOVELY KARNILLA **FALLS** BEFORE THE SEETHING ASSAULT OF HER MYSTERIOUS FOE...

...WE MUST TURN OUR ATTENTION TO AN ASSAULT OF A FAR MORE *PHYSICAL* NATURE!

TREAD *CAREFULLY*, COMRADES! THE WAY TO THIS TOWER'S *PEAK* IS MOST *TREACHEROUS!*

INDEED, MY FRIENDS! THUS I PRAY THEE -- GO *SLOWLY!*

THIS FLIMSY STRUCTURE BE NOT DESIGNED TO *SUPPORT* A WARRIOR OF VALOROUS VOLSTAGG'S *STATURE!*

'TIS NOT THY *STATURE* THAT POSES THE PROBLEM, VAST ONE--

--'TIS THINE AWE-SOME *GIRTH!*

PFAH! 'TIS MERELY THAT MY SINEWS BE MORE *OBVI-OUS* THAN THINE, GRIM ONE!

VERILY, THE EAGLE OF ASGARD CAN *SOAR* LIKE THE...

INTERJECTION: LOOK TO THE *SKY*, MY FRIENDS!

OBSERVATION: A DARKLING *CLOUD* IS COMING OUR WAY...

...BORNE ALOFT ON LEATHERY *WINGS!*

SWIFTLY, VAST ONE -- JOIN US ON THIS STURDY *CROSS-BRACE!*

"METHINKS YON HEINOUS CREATURES DOTH BE THIS PLANET'S *CARRION BIRDS*...

"...AND WORSE, METHINKS THEY'RE *HUNGRY!!*"

BUT THE SLASHING *MACE* OF HOGUN THE GRIM DOTH HUNGER *TOO*--

--FOR *BATTLE*--

--FOR *BLOOD*--

--FOR *VICTORY!!*

THIS BE NOT SOME *TOURNAMENT*, RECORDER!

'TIS A *BATTLE*... TO THE *DEATH!*

AND, VERILY, 'TWILL NOT BE *HOGUN* WHO SHALL *PERISH* HERE!!

OBSERVATION: YOUR SKILL IN COMBAT MAKES *OUR* EFFORTS APPEAR QUITE *POOR* BY COMPARISON, HOGUN!

RATHER, IT SHALL BE THESE *CURSED*...

ZOUNDS!!

DECLARATION: ONE OF THE CARRION CREATURES HAS *CAPTURED* HOGUN!

CONCLUSION: I MUST ACT SWIFTLY IF I AM TO *SAVE* HIM!

NAY, OBSERVANT ONE! IF *ANYONE* SHALL SAVE GRIM HOGUN, 'TWILL BE HIS LOYAL *BROTHER-AT-ARMS!*

MY FLESH DOTH FAIRLY *TINGLE* WITH BOUNDLESS *RAGE*--

--AND FOR DARING TO SO MUCH AS *TOUCH* VALIANT VOLSTAGG'S GOOD *COMPANION*...

SNAPP!!

...THIS UNHOLY MONSTER SHALL *PAY* WITH ITS *LIFE!!*

ART THOU **WELL**, GRIM HOGUN?

AYE... **VALIANT** VOLSTAGG.

FOR THE FIRST TIME WITHIN MEMORY, METHINKS THOU HAST PROVEN THYSELF **WORTHY** OF THE NAME.

*WHILE, SOME DISTANCE **ABOVE**...*

MILORD?

I PRAY THEE, FATHER... **SPEAK** TO ME.

I HAVE TRAVELED **FAR** TO BASK IN THE LIGHT OF THY **COUNTENANCE** ONCE MORE.

I BID THEE... WELCOME, MY SON.

I ASK THY FORGIVENESS... FOR ALL THAT THOU... HAST SUFFERED... ON MY BEHALF.

KNOW THAT I AM... PROUD OF THEE... AND ALL THY... NOBLE FELLOWS...

K'rll, I think you should cross-check these **ENERGY-METERS**. Our Lord God **ODIN** seems to be losing his **STRENGTH** far faster than we had anticipated.

Are you **CERTAIN**, N'gil?

I PRAY THEE, MY SON... UP FROM THY KNEES. I SENSE THE END NOW... COMING UPON ME...

...AND I WOULD REMEMBER THEE... STANDING PROUDLY ON THY FEET... AS BEFITS THE NEW MONARCH... OF THE REALM ETERNAL...

NAY, ALL-FATHER-- I WILL NOT HEAR THEE **SPEAK** THUS!

THOU SHALT **LIVE**--TO STAND BEFORE THE **BODIES** OF OUR ALIEN **CAPTORS!**

NAY, THUNDER GOD... DO NOT THINK ILL... OF THIS DYING RACE.

I SAY THEE... FORGIVE THEM, MY SON...

...FOR THEY... KNOW NOT... WHAT THEY...

...DO...

FATHER?

FATHER!!!

FAAATHERRR!!!

SKA-RAKK!

IN BLIND, UNTHINKING **RAGE**, THE GOD OF THUNDER **STRAINS** AGAINST THE MASSIVE BONDS THAT **HOLD** HIM -- AND WITHOUT THE LIVING ENERGY OF ODIN TO **SUSTAIN** THEIR OVERWHELMING POWER, THE SHACKLES SHUDDER... **CRACK**...

...THEN **SHATTER**!!

IN AN INSTANT, THE ODINSON HAS **FREED** THE DASHING FANDRAL, LEAVING **HIM** TO RELEASE THE LADY SIF, EVEN AS...

HOLD **STILL**, MILADY, AND I SHALL... **EH**?

BY ASGARD! 'TIS HOGUN... VOLSTAGG... AND THE RECORDER!?!

THEY STILL **LIVE**!!

AND WHEN THE THREE NEW ARRIVALS HAVE BEEN **TOLD** WHAT HAS **OCCURRED**...

THE OMNIPOTENT ODIN--**SLAIN**?!? NAY, WOULDST VALIANT VOLSTAGG HAD NE'ER LIVED TO **SEE** THIS DREADFUL DAY!

'TIS UP TO **US** TO **AVENGE** THE ALL-FATHER'S MURDER, WARRIORS!

THEN WE HAD BEST MOVE **SWIFTLY**, GRIM ONE...

...LEST THE FURIOUS THUNDER GOD DOTH *DISPATCH* OUR FOES *UNAIDED!*

VARLETS! MURDERERS! THOU HAST TAKEN THE *LIFE* OF ONE WHOSE *SHADOW* THOU WERT NOT FIT TO *STAND* IN...

SHRAKK!

...AND, BY ALL THE POWERS OF HELA'S DARK DOMAIN, I SHALL TAKE *THINE* UNWORTHY LIVES IN *TURN!!*

CHROOM!

NEVER HAVE I SEEN THE MIGHTY THOR MORE *FURIOUS*, MORE *SAVAGE!!*

AND NEVER HATH HIS RAGE BEEN MORE *DESERVED*, GRIM ONE!

FOR 'TIS A RAGE THAT DOTH FILL *MINE* HEART AS WELL!!

BWHOMP!

The Asgardians toss our armor-clad brothers about like **PLAYTHINGS**, K'rll.

In their **FURY**, they may destroy us **ALL**...

...unless...

Quickly, N'gll -- **FOLLOW** me! There is only one thing left for us to **DO!**

No, K'rll... surely you do not **MEAN**...?

But I'm afraid that is **PRECISELY** what I mean, N'gll.

We still have a goodly portion of the **ODIN-FORCE** stored in our **ENERGY-BATTERIES**...

... Just enough for us to employ... **THE SPIRIT-MOLD!!**

*SLOWLY, VERY **CAREFULLY**, THE SO-CALLED **SOUL-SURVIVOR** FITS HIS FRAIL FORM INTO THE MONSTROUS MECHANISM'S WAITING **BODY-CAVITY**--*

*--THEN, AS THE PLATFORM IS LEVERED **UPRIGHT**, HE SPEAKS...*

Once you activate the **SPIRIT-MOLD**, N'gll, I shall give **FORM** to the seething Odin-Force...and then **CONTROL** it...

Are you certain you want to go **THROUGH** with this, K'rll?

*HIS PALLID LIPS SET IN A THIN, GRIM LINE, THE CALCULATING K'RLL SLOWLY **NODS** HIS HEAD--AND MOMENTS **LATER**, SOME DISTANCE **AWAY**...*

***OBSERVATION:** OUR ARMORED ADVERSARIES HAVE BEEN **ROUTED**, MY FRIENDS!*

BUT THE BATTLE BE NOT YET ***OVER!*** ONCE ALMIGHTY ODIN'S **BODY** HATH BEEN SEEN TO ***SAFETY***...

...I SHALL RETURN TO ***DESTROY*** THESE KNAVES --AND ALL THAT THEY HATH ***WROUGHT!***

NO, THUNDER GOD! UNLESS YOU SURRENDER THIS INSTANT, IT IS *YOU* WHO SHALL BE DESTROYED--

--*DESTROYED* BY THE ONE POWER THAT DWARFS EVEN *YOURS*...

...THE POWER OF YOUR OWN ALMIGHTY *FATHER!!*

'TIS THE LIVING *ODIN-FORCE*-- EMBODIED IN *HUMANOID FORM!*

BY HELA! WE ARE *LOST!!*

NEXT ISSUE:

*THE QUEST AT LONG LAST **ENDS**, IN THE MOST **UNEXPECTED** FASHION OF ALL! BE HERE FOR...*

HOLOCAUST...AND HOMECOMING!

THOR ®

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THE MIGHTY

THOR ®

THE THUNDER GOD *DEFEATED*-- HELPLESS BEFORE THE MONSTROUS POWER OF THE *ODIN-FORCE UNLEASHED!!*

BUT ONE SHALL SAVE HIM!

AND WE GUARANTEE YOU'LL NEVER GUESS WHO!

THE MOST STARTLING SURPRISE OF THE MONTH!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN WRITER/EDITOR • WALT SIMONSON & TONY DeZUNIGA ILLUSTRATORS EXTRAORDINAIRE • GLYNIS WEIN colorist • JOHN COSTANZA letterer

HOLOCAUST and HOMECOMING!

ALMIGHTY **ODIN**, MONARCH MOST HIGH OF IMMORTAL ASGARD, IS **DEAD**-- HIS VERY **LIFE-FORCE** STOLEN BY THE FEW REMAINING MEMBERS OF AN ANCIENT DYING **RACE**!

NOW THESE SELF-STYLED **SOUL-SURVIVORS** HAVE FASHIONED THE SEETHING **ODIN-FORCE** INTO A MONSTROUS HUMANOID **FORM**, WHOSE ONLY **PURPOSE** IS TO SLAY THE FURIOUS **THOR** AND HIS DARING **COMPANIONS**!

AYE, THE ALMIGHTY ODIN IS **DEAD**, O TRUE BELIEVER ...AND **WOE** BETIDE US **ALL**!

THOU DOST HOLD THE LIFELESS **BODY** OF THY NOBLE FATHER IN THINE **ARMS**, GOOD THOR-- BUT HIS **SPIRIT** LIVES ON!

AND IT LIVES TO **DESTROY** US!!

YOU HAVE BEEN GIVEN YOUR CHANCE TO *SURRENDER*, ASGARDIANS--AND YOU HAVE FOOLISHLY *REFUSED!*

WHATEVER BEFALLS YOU *NOW*, DOLTS--IS OF YOUR OWN *MAKING!!*

DECLARATION: IT IS MY DUTY AS A *RECORDER* TO ACCURATELY *TRANSCRIBE* ALL THAT I SEE AND HEAR!

STATEMENT: THUS I AM PRESSING MY *DERMA-CIRCUITS* TO THEIR *UTMOST* SO THAT I MAY FAITHFULLY *RECORD* WHAT NEXT OCCURS!

BEWARE, MY FRIENDS! THE RAGING ODIN-FORCE HATH HURLED YON RUINED *WALL* OUR WAY!

THY *WARNING* COMES MOST *TIMELY*, GRIM HOGUN!

SKRAMM!

NO MATTER THE MADNESS OF HIS *SPIRIT*, THE *BODY* OF THE ALL-FATHER MUST NOT BE *HARMED!*

THEN METHINKS 'TIS UP TO US TO *DISTRACT* YON HOWLING BEHEMOTH WHILST THE MIGHTY THOR DOTH HIE OUR LIEGE TO *SAFETY*, HOGUN!

AYE, DASHING FANDRAL--AND *GLADLY!*

BY ASGARD! MY TRUSTY BLADE PASSES *THROUGH* THE MONSTER'S BODY AS IF THROUGH A HELL-BORN *FLAME!*

AYE, DASHING ONE-- MINE OWN ANGRY *MACE* FARES LITTLE BETTER!

*WHILE, SOME DISTANCE **AWAY** FROM THE THRONE ROOM-TURNED-BATTLEGROUND...*

are you *SUFFERING,* K'rll?

on the *CONTRARY,* N'Gll-- I have never felt more *ELATED!*

being one with the *SPIRIT-MOLD...* controlling the awesome *ODIN-FORCE...* has filled me with a sense of *POWER...*

...and more, a sense of *GLORY!*

OUR PLOY HATH *WORKED,* FRIEND FANDRAL! THE THUNDER GOD HATH REACHED *SHELTER* FOR THE ALL-FATHER'S *CORPSE!*

THEN THERE BE NO *NEED* FOR THEE TO *CONTINUE* THIS SENSE-LESS CONFLICT, GOOD WARRIORS!

HIE *THYSELVES* TO SAFETY, MY FRIENDS-- AND *SWIFTLY!*

*AT THEIR PRINCE'S **COMMAND,** THE BRAVE ASGARD-IANS TURN AND **FLEE** FROM THEIR MONSTROUS ADVER-SARY...*

*THEY DO **NOT** FLEE VERY **FAR!***

I DID NOT *WANT* TO KILL YOU ALL...

WHUD!

THUD!

...FOR YOUR *LIVING ENERGIES* COULD HAVE PRO-VIDED *POWER* ENOUGH TO SUSTAIN OUR PLANET FOR *YEARS!*

BUT BEFORE I WOULD ALLOW YOU TO *DESTROY* ALL WE HAVE LABORED SO LONG TO *PRESERVE...*

...I WILL *CRUSH* YOU BENEATH THESE FLAILING *FISTS!!*

BUT BEFORE THE ODIN-FORCE CAN CARRY OUT ITS *THREAT*...

BWAK!

EH? THE THUNDER GOD'S *HAMMER*-- IT TURNED MY FIST *ASIDE*--!!

AND WHERE MJOLNIR STRIKES, CAN THOR BE FAR BEHIND?

AGAIN, MY MALLET DID NOT *RETURN* TO ME *--BUT THE *REASON* AT LAST BECOMES *CLEAR!*

'TWAS SIMPLE FOR THOSE WHO *CONTROL* ODIN'S POWER TO *REMOVE* MINE HAMMER'S *ENCHANTMENT!*

*AS IN THOR #261. --L.

AND FOR *THAT* INDIGNITY AND COUNTLESS *OTHERS*--

--VERILY, THEY SHALL PAY!!

KRA-KOOM!

THOUGH THOU ART THE *LIVING EMBODIMENT* OF THE ALL-FATHER'S *POWER*, CREATURE--

--STILL DOST THOU *LACK* HIS WISDOM, HIS *NOBILITY*...

...AND *THUS* SHALT THOU...

UUNFF!!

PWAM!

THE LADY *SIF* CANNOT STAND IDLY BY WHILST MY BELOVED IS IGNOBLY *FELLED!*

METHINKS THE TIME FOR *ACTION* IS--*NOW!!*

DO AS THOU THINKEST THOU *MUST*, MILADY!

BUT VALOROUS *VOLSTAGG* SHALL HOLD BACK UNTIL HE DETERMINES WHERE HIS MATCHLESS *SKILLS* MAY BEST BE *EMPLOYED!*

UNHAND MY PRINCE, THOU HEINOUS CREATURE --OR PERISH.!!

AH, THE GOOD LADY SIF! I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN YOU, MY DEAR!

YOU ARE A PERSISTENT BREED, YOU ASGARDIANS!

PERSISTENT-- AND MOST ANNOYING.!!

CHOOM!

UUNNGGHH.!!

IN DARING TO HARM THE WOMAN I LOVE, MOST MONSTROUS ONE-- THOU HAST MADE THY FINAL MISTAKE!

WE CAME TO THIS WORLD CALLED THE DOOMSDAY STAR SOLELY TO FIND OUR MISSING LIEGE--

--BUT THOU HAST TURNED OUR NOBLE QUEST INTO A VENDETTA!

AND NOT EVEN THE ALL-FATHER'S BOUNDLESS ENERGIES SHALL SAVE THEE FROM OUR VENGEANCE NOW.!!

WHAM.

YOUR CONFIDENCE IS TRULY INSPIRING, ODINSON...

CHUD!

...MATCHED ONLY BY YOUR AUDACITY...

...IN THINKING YOU EVEN STOOD A CHANCE OF SOMEHOW DEFEATING ME!

THWAM!

INCREDIBLE! THE ASGARDIANS LIE BATTERED AND DEFEATED-- YET STILL THEY STRUGGLE VAINLY TO RISE ONCE MORE TO THEIR FEET!

WHAT A TRULY REMARKABLE RACE THEY ARE!

perhaps we need not SLAY them after all! while they all lie HELPLESS thus...

...WE CAN ATTACH THEM TO THE ENERGY-SIPHONS WHICH SUPPLY OUR PLANET'S LIFE-SUSTAINING POWER...

...AND USE THEIR SEETHING LIFE-FORCES TO REFILL OUR NOW-DEPLETED STORAGE BATTERIES SO WE CAN...

NAY!

WHAT--?!?

I SAID THEE NAY, MONSTER! THOU SHALT NOT HARM MY NOBLE COMPANIONS SO LONG AS VALIANT VOLSTAGG DOTH LIVE!

RELEASE MY COMRADES, CREATURE-- LEST THOU DOST FORCE ME TO UNLEASH MY MATCHLESS RAGE UPON THEE!

RELEASE THEM, I SAY THEE--OR SUFFER THE CONSEQUENCES!

AND JUST WHAT COULD YOU DO TO ME, YOU OVER-SIZED SACK OF SUET, THAT COULD BEGIN TO COMPARE TO WHAT I CAN DO TO YOU?

ZOUNDS.

TH-THOU ART MAKING A GRAVE *MISTAKE,* BEHEMOTH! THE P-POWER OF VALOROUS VOLSTAGG IS *LEGEND!*

FOR THINE OWN *SAKE,* KNAVE, PRAY DO NOT *FORCE* ME TO... TO...

SHRAKK!

AARRGGHH!!

THAT B-BURST OF SEARING *POWER*... FROM *MY* GAUNTLETED HAND?

CAN IT TRULY *BE?* HAVE I SOMEHOW *TAPPED* SOME HIDDEN *WELLSPRING* DEEP WITHIN ME?

YOU... *HURT* ME, ASGARDIAN!

YOU MUST *NOT* BE PERMITTED TO DO SO *AGAIN!*

STAND YOUR *GROUND,* OBESE ONE... AND I WILL *DESTROY* YOU!!

NAY, MONSTER-- 'TIS THE *LION OF WARRIORS* THOU DOST TRIFLE WITH HERE!

HE WHO HATH EVER STOOD AT THE *FOREFRONT* OF BLAZING *BATTLE* IN GLORIOUS ASGARD'S *SERVICE--*

SHROWW!

ZKAKK!

--AND HE WHO HATH EVER BEEN *TRIUMPHANT!!*

NEVER, FOOL-- *NEVER!!*

BY ASGARD! M-MAYHAP I WAS TOO **HASTY** IN MINE HEROIC **ASSAULT!**

MY NEW-FOUND **POWER** DOTH SEEM TO **AFFECT** YON MONSTER **NOT AT ALL!**

NATURALLY **NOT,** FOOL! YOUR SUDDEN SHOW OF STRENGTH WAS MOST **IMPRESSIVE**--BUT **I** AM THE LIVING **ODIN-FORCE INCARNATE!**

HOW CAN YOU EVER **HOPE** TO DEFEAT THE VERY **EM-BODIMENT** OF HE WHO WAS ONCE YOUR OWN ALMIGHTY **MON...**

HOWLING IN IMPOTENT **RAGE,** THE SEETHING BEHEMOTH STAGGERS, THEN **TOPPLES** FACE-FORWARD TO THE COLD HARD **FLOOR**--

AARRGGHHH

--THERE TO **SHATTER** LIKE A THING OF **CRYSTAL,** ITS COUNTLESS **FRAGMENTS** DANCING IN MID-AIR FOR AN INSTANT, HISSING AND SPUTTERING--

--THEN, LIKE SO MANY DYING **EMBERS,** ABRUPTLY FADING INTO **NOTHINGNESS!**

WHOMP!

THOU HAST DONE **WELL**, VOLUMINOUS ONE!

IN SUMMONING ALL ITS ENERGIES TO **COMBAT** THEE, THE CREATURE LITERALLY... **USED ITSELF UP!**

PFAH! 'TWAS **NOTHING**, MILORD.

BUT METHINKS OUR **WORRIES** BE NOT YET **OVER**, FRIEND THOR!

"BEHOLD THE ALIEN **ENERGY-SIPHONS** WITH WHICH THE SOUL-SURVIVORS DID **STEAL** GREAT ODIN'S **LIFE-FORCE**...

WOOM!

WOOM!

WOOM!

"SUDDENLY, THEY BEGIN TO **ERUPT** IN SAVAGE FURY ALL **ABOUT** US!"

--AN **EFFECT** THAT IS ECHOED AND **MAGNIFIED** IN THE NEARBY CHAMBER WHICH HOUSES THE MOUNTAINOUS **SPIRIT-MOLD!**

KWA-OOM!

NO! the power-feedback from the Odin-creature's **DESTRUCTION** was far **TOO GREAT!**

our mechanisms are all **EXPLODING!**

DESTROYED.. everything we have **STRUGGLED** so hard all these years to **MAINTAIN**...

all of it... **GONE!**

we tried all that we possibly could, K'rll, to keep our dream **ALIVE**...

...perhaps it is time we put the dream to **REST.**

NO! our dream can **NEVER** die! not so long as **ONE** of us still lives and breathes...

...and **HATES!!**

no, K'rll... **COME BACK!**

QUERY: HOW DID YOU SUDDENLY ACQUIRE THIS BOUNTY OF STRENGTH, VOLSTAGG?

OBSERVATION: YOU NEVER EVIDENCED SUCH AWESOME POWER BEFORE!

YET OBVIOUSLY, GOOD COMRADES-- 'TWAS ALWAYS WITHIN ME! IT MERELY REQUIRED THE PROPER PROVOCATION TO BRING IT FORTH!

'TIS NOT LIGHTLY THAT VOLSTAGG'S WARRIOR HEART IS OFTIMES LIKENED TO THE HEART OF A RAGING SUN!

THEN MAYHAP THOU CANST SPARE A PORTION OF THY BOUNDLESS POWER, VAST ONE--

-- THAT THOU MIGHTEST IGNITE THE SPARK OF LIFE WITHIN OUR NOBLE LIEGE ONCE MORE!

THOU KNOWEST FULL WELL, FRIEND THOR, THAT THE VERY LIFE OF VOLSTAGG BE ODIN'S FOR THE ASKING!

LEAD ON, NOBLE THUNDER GOD! THE EAGLE OF ASGARD SHALL DO ALL HE CAN...

...AND MORE!

IN OTHER CULTURES, THE LAYING ON OF HANDS IS SAID TO POSSESS GREAT CURATIVE POWERS IF PROPERLY APPLIED--

--AND ALTHOUGH THOSE OF ASGARD ARE A WARRIOR RACE, NOT TRULY GIVEN TO OLD WIVE'S TALES, STILL DO THEY PART THEIR LIPS IN PRAYER...

...AS VOLSTAGG PLIES HIS NEW-FOUND POWER ONCE MORE!

A MOMENT PASSES, THEN ANOTHER, AND YET ANOTHER--AND STILL ALMIGHTY ODIN'S BODY LIES STILL, UNMOVING!

UNTIL, AT LAST...

'TIS HOPELESS, MILADY. OUR SIRE'S SPIRIT HATH DEPARTED TO THE HALLS OF VALHALLA!

MY FATHER IS... DEAD.

PLEASE, MY LOVE-- THOU MUST NOT BLAME THYSELF! THOU DIDST ALL THAT THOU COULDST!

NAY, FAIR SIF! MAYHAP HAD WE NOT *TARRIED* ON LEVIANON OR WITH THE GREY GARGOYLE,* REGAL *ODIN* MIGHT YET BE...

EH?

you will not *RUIN* all we have sought to *PRESERVE*, Asgardians!

I'll kill you *ALL* first... *KILL* you!!

*AS WITNESSED IN *THOR* #256-259.--LEN.

NAY, VARLET--IF THERE IS *DEATH* TO BE DEALT HERE, 'TIS *I* WHO SHALL DO THE *DEALING!*

NO, BELOVED--THOU *MUSTN'T!!*

STAND THEE *BACK*, MILADY! THIS ALIEN SCUM HATH *SLAIN* MY NOBLE *FATHER!* NOW *I* SHALL SLAY...

ZOUNDS! MIGHTY *MJOLNIR*--ONCE MORE IT DOTH *RETURN* TO ME!

BUT *HOW*--?!?

SOMEHOW, IT'S ODIN-BORN *ENCHANT-MENT* HATH BEEN *RESTORED* TO IT!

BUT, VERILY, THAT IS *IMPOSSIBLE*...

...UNLESS...

AYE, NOBLE THUNDER GOD... THY LORD AND LIEGE DOTH ONCE AGAIN *LIVE!*

AND I SAY THEE, MY SON, PUT *DOWN* THY WOULD-BE *VICTIM!* LET ALL *HOSTIL-ITIES* HERE NOW *CEASE!*

THE TIME HATH COME, NOT FOR *VENGEANCE*... BUT FOR *REJOICING!!*

THEY ARE INDEED VALIANT, THESE BOLD WARRIORS OF ASGARD!

ON WORLDS BEYOND NUMBERING, THEY HAVE BATTLED AND DEFEATED FOES WHO WOULD HAVE SHRIVELED THE MINDS OF LESSER BEINGS!

BUT THE TEARS WHICH NOW FLOW FREELY FROM THEIR GLISTENING EYES, AT THE SIGHT OF THEIR BELOVED MONARCH RISING UNSTEADILY TO HIS FEET, MARKS THEM AS MORE THAN SIMPLE WARRIORS!

AYE... MUCH, MUCH MORE INDEED!

AND THE LOVE THAT FILLS THEIR HEARTS AS THEY HUMBLY KNEEL BEFORE THE OMNIPOTENT ODIN... WELL, IT ALL BUT DEFIES DESCRIPTION!

WE ARE THY SERVANTS, MILORD! WHAT WOULDST THOU HAVE OF US?

I BID THEE RISE, THOR--THEE AND THY COMPANIONS!

PRITHEE STAND, GOOD WARRIORS--AND KNOW THAT THY LIEGE DOTH CHERISH THEE!

RISE AND BE PROUD, MY CHILDREN--FOR THIS DAY THOU HAST RESTORED...

UUHNN!!

FATHER?

NAY-- NOT AGAIN!!

DESPAIRETH NOT, MY SON... I SHALL NOT LEAVE THEE AGAIN. I MERELY FEEL... FATIGUED.

METHINKS, NOBLE THOR, THE TIME HATH COME FOR US ALL TO GO... HOME.

AYE, MY LIEGE... AT LAST.

I should never have ALLOWED K'rll to run off ALONE!

unless I find him QUICKLY, I will SHARE the blame for what he...

EH?

IS THE ALL-FATHER WELL, MY LOVE?

HE SLEEPS, FAIR ONE--AND MAYHAP 'TIS FOR THE BEST.

REGAL ODIN HATH SUFFERED A GREAT ORDEAL HERE--AND IT HATH TAKEN ITS TOLL!

the Asgardians are headed for their docked STARJAMMER...

...but what has become of K'RLL?

could the Asgardians have SLAIN him before they...

STATEMENT: YOUR COMPANION IS UN-HARMED, SOUL-SURVIVOR!

the RECORDER?!? I...I...do not UNDERSTAND!

wh-where is...K'rll?

STATEMENT: YOU WILL FIND YOUR FRIEND WAITING IN THE CHAMBER JUST BEYOND!

OBSERVATION: YOU SHOULD GO TO HIM SWIFTLY --FOR HE NEEDS YOU!

WHEN N'GLL AT LAST FINDS HIM, THE SOBBING K'RLL IS HUDDLED ON THE CHAMBER FLOOR, CLUTCHING A PIECE OF A SHATTERED ENERGY-SIPHON TIGHTLY TO HIS CHEST.

GENTLY, N'GLL PRIES THE USELESS FRAGMENT FROM HIS WEEPING COMRADE'S HAND, EVEN AS THE OTHER SOUL-SURVIVORS GATHER ABOUT THEM...

...AND THEN, TOGETHER, THEY MOURN THE PASSING OF A DREAM!

THE ALL-FATHER CANNOT BE *CARRIED* BACK TO THE GOLDEN REALM LIKE SOME LIMP AND HELPLESS *CHILD!*

HE MUST RIDE IN A CONVEYANCE AS *BEFITS* HIS NOBLE *STATURE!*

AND, WITH MJOLNIR'S *AID*, HE SHALL *HAVE* ONE!

*THUS, IT SOON BECOMES **OBVIOUS** THAT THE THUNDER GOD'S **SKILL** WITH HIS MYSTIC HAMMER IS **NOT** LIMITED SOLELY TO **DESTRUCTION!***

PRAY HAVE A *CARE*, GOOD COMRADES! WE MUST DO NAUGHT TO *DISTURB* THE BLESSED *ODIN-SLEEP!*

LET US NOW *BOARD* THE STAR-JAMMER AND *BEGONE*, MY FRIENDS!

ASGARD IS *WAITING!!*

*NOT LONG AFTER, THE INCREDIBLE ASGARDIAN STARCRAFT SAILS OUT THROUGH THE **RIFT** THE MIGHTY THOR HAD EARLIER PUT IN THE MONSTROUS **WALL AROUND THE WORLD*** --

*--LEAVING THE DYING PLANET THAT HAD ONCE BEEN KNOWN AS **TEMPLEWORLD**, BUT IS NOW CALLED ONLY THE **DOOMSDAY STAR**, FAR **BEHIND** THEM...*

*...TO BE AT LENGTH **FORGOTTEN** WITH THE REST OF LIFE'S **NIGHTMARES!***

** SEVERAL ISSUES **BACK**. --LEN.*

HAST THOU YET DETERMINED THE **SOURCE** OF VOLSTAGG'S RECENT **POWER**, FRIEND THOR?

AYE, GRIM ONE. METHINKS THE ALL-FATHER, SENSING HE WAS **DYING**, DID SOMEHOW **TRANSFER** HIS REMAINING **STRENGTH** TO THE UNSUSPECTING VOLSTAGG*--

--KNOWING THAT SO LONG AS THE **ODIN-FORCE** LIVED, OUR LIEGE HIMSELF COULD NOT TRULY **DIE!**

* AND IF YOU DON'T BELIEVE **THOR**, CHECK OUT PG.15, PANEL 6 AND PG.22, PANEL 4, LAST ISH. --LEN.

THE REST OF THE JOURNEY PASSES WITHOUT **INCIDENT**, AND AT LENGTH, THERE GROWS A **GLEAMING** IN THE DISTANCE THAT FAIRLY PUTS THE STARS TO **SHAME**--

--FOR IT IS THE GOLDEN GLEAMING OF **IMMORTAL ASGARD'S SHINING TOWERS!**

LIKE SOME MIGHTY SKY-BORNE **EAGLE**, THE REGAL **STARJAMMER** SWOOPS LOW OVER THE REALM ETERNAL--

--COMING TO REST IN THE VERY **COURTYARD** OF THE PALACE ROYAL, EVEN AS THE FIRST EXULTANT **CRIES OF RECOGNITION** RING OUT FROM THE GATHERED **THRONG!**

NEEDLESS TO MENTION, THERE IS GREAT **REJOICING** IN THE GOLDEN REALM THIS DAY!

HAIL THOR!

HAIL ODIN!

HAIL ASGARD!

I SHALL HIE THE WEARY **ALL-FATHER** TO HIS **CHAMBERS**, GOOD PEOPLE--

--AND THEN I SHALL RETURN TO DO THEE **HONOR!**

AND, MOMENTS LATER, IN THE ALL-FATHER'S **BED-CHAMBERS...**

ALMIGHTY ODIN DOTH REQUIRE MUCH ***REST,*** IF HE IS TO ***REGAIN*** THE STRENGTH WHICH WAS ***STOLEN*** FROM HIM BY THE SOUL-SURVIVORS!

THUS HE HATH LAPSED INTO THE FABLED ***ODIN-SLEEP***-- WHICH NO MAN NOR GOD DARES ***DISTURB!***

SLEEP ***WELL,*** MY NOBLE FATHER!

AND KNOW THAT THE ***THRONE*** OF GLORIOUS ASGARD SHALL BE KEPT ***SAFE*** FOR THEE BY THINE EVER-FAITHFUL ***SON!***

AND SOON...

NOBLE PRINCE, THE ***PRESENCE*** OF THEE AND THY COMPANIONS IS REQUESTED IN THE ROYAL ***THRONE ROOM!***

BY LOYAL ***BALDER,*** I WAGER-- TO BID US ***WELCOME HOME!***

THEN WHY DOES A NOISOME ***STENCH*** EMANATE FROM THEREIN, MY LOVE?

I SENSE IT ***TOO,*** FAIR SIF! 'TIS THE STINK OF PUREST... ***EVIL!***

AND DESERVEDLY ***SO,*** FRIEND THOR!

BEHOLD HE WHO NOW SITS THE GOLDEN ***THRONE!!***

NAY! 'TIS NOT ***POSSIBLE!***

BY THE COLD TOUCH OF ***HELA!*** HAVE WE NOT BEEN THROUGH ***ENOUGH??***

WHY BE THOU SO **SURPRISED,** GOD OF THUNDER? SURELY THOU DIDST **EXPECT** AS MUCH!

AFTER ALL, WHO **BETTER** TO SIT THE THRONE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD IN THE UNTIMELY **ABSENCE** OF OMIPOTENT **ODIN** AND THEE, THAN THINE OWN MOST ABLE **BROTHER...**

LOKI!!

NEXT ISSUE:

WITH THE **ENCHANTRESS** AND THE **EXECUTIONER** BESIDE HIM, THE GOD OF EVIL **STRIKES!** BE HERE FOR...

"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!"

THOR ®

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THE MIGHTY THOR ®

STRUGGLE ALL YOU WILL, MY BROTHER--BUT YOU CANNOT HOPE TO WIN!!

TODAY LOKI TRIUMPHS!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

LEN WEIN ✶ WALT SIMONSON & TONY DeZUNIGA ✶ GLYNIS WEIN ✶ JOE ROSEN
WRITER / EDITOR — ARTISTS / ILLUSTRATORS — COLORIST — LETTERER

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!

KNOW YE THIS! THE QUEST FOR THE LONG-MISSING **ODIN** AT LAST IS **OVER!**

BONE-WEARY BUT UNBOWED, THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS STALWART COMPANIONS HAVE **RETURNED** WITH THE MUCH-WEAKENED ALL-FATHER TO IMMORTAL **ASGARD**, TO FIND THEIR TROUBLES BE NOT YET **ENDED**...

...FOR THE MALEVOLENT **LOKI**, GOD OF ALL-CONSUMING **EVIL**--AND THOR'S OWN **HALF-BROTHER**--NOW SITS THE GOLDEN **THRONE!**

WHY LOOKEST THOU SO **STUNNED**, THUNDER GOD? AM I NOT, AFTER ALL, NEXT IN LINE TO **INHERIT** THE MANTLE OF **POWER**?

IS IT NOT ONLY **FITTING** THEN, THAT **LOKI NOW RULES THE REALM ETERNAL!?**

AND **WE**, HIS LOYAL **SERVITORS**, STAND READY TO **SLAY** THOSE WHO WILL NOT **BEND** TO LOKI'S **WILL!**

NAY, EVIL ONE! NE'ER SHALT THOU DEFILE THE ALL-FATHER'S RULE!

NOT WHILST THE GOD OF THUNDER DOTH LIVE!!

STAND YE DOWN, BASE VILLAIN!

STAND YE DOWN FROM THIS THRONE-- WHILST THOU STILL CANST WALK!

TSK TSK. I SEE THY TEMPER HATH NOT YET MELLOWED, MY BROTHER.

AND I HAD SO HOPED THOU WOULDST TAKE MY GOOD FORTUNE WELL.

THOU HAST HEARD THE WORDS OF OUR NEW LORD AND LIEGE, THUNDER GOD!

NOW GET THEE ON THY KNEES BEFORE HIM--AND SHOW HIM PROPER FEALTY!

SO-- KRODA THE DUELLIST!

I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN THOU WOULDST STAND BESIDE THE PRINCE OF EVIL!

SINCE OUR LONG-AGO QUEST TO FORESTALL THE COMING OF RAGNAROK,* THOU HAST SUPPORTED MY BROTHER'S VILE MACHINATIONS!

BEGONE FROM ME, KNAVE-- LEST I CRUSH THEE LIKE THE FLEA THOU TRULY ART!

AS WITNESSED IN TALES OF ASGARD FROM THOR 118-128. --LEN.

'TIS OBVIOUS I MUST PROVE MY RIGHT TO SIT THE GOLDEN THRONE, THUNDER GOD-- ERE THOU DOST DECIMATE THOSE LOYAL TO ME!

THUS LET THE CASK OF SOVEREIGNITY BE NOW BROUGHT FORTH!

BEHOLD, MY FRIENDS-- THE CASK DOTH BEAR THE SACRED ODIN-SEAL!

SURELY THERE MUST BE SOME SORT OF SORCERY AT WORK HERE, DASHING FANDRAL.

IF SO, GRIM HOGUN, IT DOTH BODE ILL FOR MY BELOVED THOR!

IF THOU DOST PLAN SOME NEW *TREACHERY*, LOKI...

NAY, BROTHER--I MERELY WISH TO *READ* THEE A PORTION OF THE SACRED *SCROLL* CONTAINED HEREIN!

IT IS WRIT IN ALMIGHTY ODIN'S OWN *HAND*, AND IT READS *THUSLY*...

"...SHOULD I E'ER BE UNABLE TO *RULE* IMMORTAL ASGARD, THEN THAT TASK SHALL FALL TO *WHICHEVER* OF MY SONS IS *FIRST* ABLE TO SIT THE GOLDEN THRONE IN MY *PLACE!*

"THIS NOBLE SON SHALL *RULE* THE REALM ETERNAL IN MY STEAD, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS I AM ONCE MORE FIT TO *GOVERN*--AND, IN MY NAME, LET NO MAN SAY HIM *NAY!*"

THOU CANST READ IT FOR *THY-SELF* IF THOU WOULDST LIKE.

IF WHAT HE SAYS BE *FACT*, FRIEND THOR--THE THRONE IS RIGHTLY *HIS!*

THOU DIDST *RELINQUISH* THINE *OWN* CLAIM TO IT WHEN THOU DIDST *LEAVE* THE REALM ETERNAL TO *SEEK* THE MISSING ALL-FATHER!

AND IN THY FATHER'S *NAME*, MY LOVE--THOU ART BOUND TO *OBEY* THY BROTHER'S *COMMANDS*.

I FEAR THE LADY SIF SPEAKS *TRULY*, PRINCE OF EVIL.

VOICE THY *WILL*--AND IT SHALL SWIFTLY BE *DONE!*

I DO NOT INTEND TO *ABUSE* MY POWER, THUNDER GOD.

I SAY MERELY--GET THEE AND THY COMPANIONS FROM MY *SIGHT!* FOR THE NONCE, 'TWILL BE *ENOUGH*.

THEN, AT THY *COMMAND*, EVIL ONE--WE *GO!* BUT I SAY UNTO THEE--*ENJOY* THY NEW-FOUND POWER WHILST STILL THOU *CANST!*

SOON, THE ALL-FATHER SHALL BE *WELL* ENOUGH TO ONCE MORE ASSUME HIS *THRONE*--AND, AT THAT MOMENT, THOU SHALT *PAY* FOR THY CRIMES A *THOUSAND-FOLD!*

UNFORTUNATELY, MINE OH-SO-NOBLE BROTHER IS *RIGHT!* IF I AM TO *RETAIN* THE GOLDEN THRONE, MY FRIENDS...

...CERTAIN *STEPS* MUST BE TAKEN TO *DEAL* WITH THE AILING *ODIN!*

WE *HEAR* THEE, LOKI...

...AND WE GLADLY *OBEY!*

AND WHEN THE **ENCHANTRESS** AND THE **EXECUTIONER** HAVE STOLEN SILENTLY FROM THE CHAMBER...

IT APPEARS THE THUNDER GOD AND COMPANY **BELIEVED** THY LITTLE CHARADE, MY PRINCE.

AYE, MAGRAT--AND THE **IRONY** OF IT ALL **ASTONISHES** ME!

TO THINK THAT, AFTER ALL MY FUTILE **EFFORTS** IN THE PAST TO ACHIEVE MY PLACE AS **RIGHTFUL RULER OF ASGARD**--

--THE GOLDEN THRONE IS FINALLY **HANDED** TO ME IN RESPONSE TO ONE WELL-FORGED **DOCUMENT!**

BUT THE SCROLL **ALONE** DID NOT GAIN YOU **VICTORY**, MILORD.

"AYE, SNAYKAR-- I MUST ALSO GIVE CREDIT TO THE AWESOME **ARMY** OF EMPTY-ARMORED **WARRIORS** I MATERIALIZED JUST BEYOND THE CITY'S **GATES!**

"THE PEOPLE OF ASGARD FAIRLY **RALLIED** ABOUT ME WHEN I SEEMINGLY **CONQUERED** THOSE UNKNOWN FOEMEN--AND **BANISHED** THEM TO **OBLIVION!**

"AND ONCE THE GOOD WILL OF ALL ASGARD AT LAST WAS ON MY SIDE, THE LOVELY **ENCHANTRESS** AND I CAST A SPELL OF **FORGETFULNESS** UPON THEM--

"--SO MY NEW SUBJECTS WOULD REMEMBER ONLY THAT THEY WERE NOW **LOYAL** TO ME, BUT NOT THE REASON **WHY!**"

AND EVEN AS THE GLOATING GOD OF EVIL FONDLY **STROKES** HIS ILL-GAINED THRONE, THE NEXT GRIM **STEP** IN HIS NEFARIOUS PLAN IS ALREADY WELL **UNDER WAY.**

SWIFTLY, SILENTLY, A COLD CIRCLE OF ARCANE **FIRE** GROWS IN THE SHADOWY **CEILING** OF A FAR DISTANT **CHAMBER**...

...UNTIL THE SUPERNATURAL CIRCLE **SWALLOWS** ITSELF WHOLE, LEAVING ONLY A DARK GAPING **WOUND** IN ITS PLACE!

THEN, LIKE MUTE HEMP **SERPENTS**, HEAVY **ROPES** SLITHER OUT FROM THE NIGHT-BLACK **HOLE**...

...WRITHING AND TWISTING, YET MOVING WITH GRIM **PURPOSE**, AS IF AT SOME UNSEEN MASTER'S **COMMAND**...

...UNTIL THEY KNOT THEMSELVES SECURELY ABOUT THE ORNATELY-CARVED **HANDLES** OF THE SLEEPING ODIN'S VERY **BED!**

WITH HARDLY A **LURCH**-- FOR IT IS FORBIDDEN TO **DISTURB** THE FABLED **ODIN-SLEEP**--THE GREAT WOODEN VESSEL IS **LIFTED** FROM ITS WIDE CRADLE, AND DRAWN SLOWLY--BUT **SURELY**--UP TOWARDS THE NEWLY-FORMED **PORTAL** IN THE VAST CHAMBER'S **CEILING**...

...WHERE **EVIL** LIES WAITING WITH THICKLY-CORDED **ARMS** AND SOFT BEWITCHING **EYES**...

A MOMENT **LONGER**, ENCHANTRESS-- AND ODIN SHALL BE **OURS!**

'TIS A MOMENT MY VENGEFUL **HEART** HATH LONG **AWAITED!**

THOU DOST **FORGET**, EXECUTIONER--THE OMNIPOTENT ONE IS **NOT** OURS TO **DISPOSE** OF!

WE CAN DO NAUGHT BUT **OBEY** GRIM LOKI'S COMMANDS--

--LEST OUR **OWN** LIVES BE ULTIMATELY **FORFEIT!**

AYE, SORCERESS, WELL DO I **KNOW** IT-- AND LITTLE DO I **LIKE** IT!

BUT MAYHAP THE TIME WILL COME WHEN THE BALANCE OF POWER SHALL **SHIFT** ONCE MORE...

...AND WHEN IT **DOES**, WE SHALL BE **WAITING!**

*WHILE, ON THE VERY **PARAPETS** OF THE PALACE IMPERIAL...*

VERILY, MY MIND DOTH **REEL**, GOOD COMRADES! WE **LEAVE** THE ROYAL THRONE IN THE CARE OF BRAVE **BALDER**...

...AND **RETURN** TO FIND A VICIOUS **VIPER** SITTING SMUGLY UPON IT!

IF EVIL LOKI HATH SOMEHOW **HARMED** THE NOBLE BALDER, VALIANT **VOLSTAGG** SHALL REND THE FIEND **LIMB** FROM...

NAY, VAST ONE! 'TIS SAID THAT BALDER DID DEPART WITH THE NORN QUEEN **KARNILLA** FOR HER NATIVE LAND, WHEN LOKI **DISMISSED** HIM FROM HIS **DUTY.**

THEN MAYHAP WE SHOULD HIE OURSELVES TO THE NORN QUEEN'S **KINGDOM**--AND **SPEAK** TO OUR ABSENT COMRADE.

FOR METHINKS THERE BE **MORE** TO THIS BUSINESS THAN CLEARLY MEETS THE **EYE.**

AYE, MILADY...

...WHERE **LOKI** IS INVOLVED, DECEIT AND TREACHERY ARE **COMMONPLACE!**

FANDRAL! HOGUN! VOLSTAGG! I CHARGE THEE TO **PROTECT** THE SLUMBERING **ALL-FATHER**, MY FRIENDS--

--WHILST THE FAIR **SIF** AND I MAKE HASTE TO KARNILLA'S DARK **DOMAIN!**

GLADLY, GOOD PRINCE!

AYE, NOBLE THUNDER GOD, FEAR THEE ***NOT!*** IN DEFENSE OF ALMIGHTY ODIN, VALOROUS VOLSTAGG'S ***EYE*** SHALL BE AS THAT OF AN ***EAGLE***... MINE ***ARM*** SHALL BE AS THAT OF A ***TITAN***... MY ***HEART*** SHALL BE AS THAT OF A ***LION***...

...AND THY ***MOUTH*** SHALL BE AS THAT OF THE BELLOWING ***WIND!***

NOW ***COME***, VOLUMINOUS ONE! THE ALL-FATHER IS ***WAITING!***

AND SHORTLY, AFTER A VISIT TO THE ROYAL ***STABLES***...

THOUGH THY PRESENCE ***GLADDENS*** ME, THOU NEEDEST NOT HAVE ***ACCOMPANIED*** US, RECORDER!

WE WOULD HAVE ***TOLD*** THEE ALL WE MAY ***LEARN*** NOW UPON OUR ***RETURN!***

DECLARATION: IT IS MY GIVEN DUTY TO ***RECORD*** ALL THAT MAY TRANSPIRE ***FIRSTHAND!***

OBSERVATION: STILL, ONE WOULD THINK THAT A RACE AS ***ADVANCED*** AS YOU ASGARDIANS WOULD HAVE CONCEIVED A LESS ***PRIMITIVE*** MODE OF ***TRANSIT!***

STATEMENT: WHOA, HORSE-- ***WHOA!***

AS THOU DIDST ***SAY***, FRIEND RECORDER-- 'TIS THY DUTY TO RECORD ***ALL*** THAT MAY OCCUR THIS DAY--!

INCLUDING, METHINKS, THINE ***OWN*** FIRST CASE OF ***SADDLE SORES!***

BUT AT LENGTH, THE ASGARDIAN'S LIVELY ***BANTER*** *GIVES WAY TO A MORE* ***MELAN-CHOLY*** *MOOD--*

--AS THE GLEAMING SPIRES OF GLORI-OUS ***ASGARD*** *GIVE WAY TO THE DARK AND TWISTING THORNS AND BRANCHES OF KARNILLA'S* ***FOREST PRIMEVAL!***

...FOR THIS TERRIBLE TANGLE OF MONSTROUS GROWTH HARBORS A MOST **PRIME EVIL** INDEED!

HEIMDALL'S EYES! 'TIS A **STORM GIANT!!**

WELCOME, LITTLE FLEAS-- TO YOUR **DOOM!**

IN TIMES **PAST**, MY LOVE, THE STORM GIANTS HATH STOOD **BESIDE** THY BROTHER **LOKI!**

DOST THOU **THINK...?**

IF **SO**, MILADY, THE GOD OF EVIL WAS AN OVERCONFIDENT **FOOL**-- FOR SENDING BUT **ONE** OF THIS HEINOUS ILK AGAINST US!

WITH **THEE** AT MY SIDE AND MIGHTY **MJOLNIR** IN MY HAND, WE SHALL YET **OVERCOME** SUCH VILLAINY!

IF YOU TRULY **BELIEVE** THAT, THUNDER GOD--

SWAK!

--'TIS **YOU** WHO ARE THE **FOOL!**

FOR YOUR COMRADES ARE BESIDE YOU **NO LONGER**--

BEWARE, BELOVED-- THERE ARE **TWO** OF THE MONSTROUS CREATURES!

--AND YOUR FABLED **HAMMER** SHALL SOON BE **PLUCKED** FROM YOUR LIFELESS **HAND!**

ALL THE BETTER TO **SLAY** YOU, MY DEAR!

WITH THE RECORDER *DAZED*, 'TIS FOR ME ALONE TO *AID* THE MIGHTY THOR, AS BEFITS A *GODDESS BORN!*

BUT THE VERY *SIGHT* OF YON LUMBERING BEHEMOTHS FILLS ME WITH A *TERROR* SUCH AS I HAVE NEVER KNOWN *BEFORE!*

A FEAR SO *GREAT*, I... I AM UNABLE EVEN TO *MOVE!*

PUT DOWN YOUR *WEAPON*, LITTLE ONE-- AND YOUR DEATH SHALL BE *SWIFT!*

NAY, OGRE-- I HAVE *EARNED* THE RIGHT TO WIELD MINE URU HAMMER IN *BATTLES* BEYOND NUMBERING...

...AND I SHALL NOT RELINQUISH MY *MALLET*-- OR MY *LIFE*-- TILL MY FINAL BREATH HATH *FLED* ME!

IN ODIN'S NAME WAS MYSTIC MJOLNIR *FORGED!*

WHUD!

CHUD!

NOW IN ODIN'S NAME-- *IT STRIKES!!*

GRONDAR?

CURSE YOU, ASGARDIAN! YOUR HAMMER *THRUST* THE TREE TRUNK FROM MY HAND-- THUS *SMITING* MY OWN DEAR *BROTHER!*

YOU SHALL *PAY* FOR THIS, LITTLE ONE! YOU SHALL...

NAY, GIANT-- NOT SO LONG AS MINE HAMMER'S *ENCHANTMENT* DECREES IT MUST EVER RETURN TO MINE *HAND*, NO MATTER *WHAT* MIGHT BAR ITS *PATH*...

BROK!

...INCLUDING *THEE!!*

HOWLING MADLY, THE STORM GIANT TOPPLES FACE-FORWARD, WHILE IN ODIN'S **BEDCHAMBERS** BENEATH THE PALACE IMPERIAL...

BY THE RAINBOW SPAN! WE ARE **TOO LATE!**

ALMIGHTY ODIN HATH ALREADY BEEN **ABDUCTED!**

AND **THERE,** IN THE CEILING ABOVE US-- BEHOLD THE **METHOD** OF THE CRIME!

A LONG-ABANDONED **PASSAGE-WAY** WHICH LEADS, I WAGER, TO THE **FURNACE-PITS** WHICH SUPPLY HEAT AND LIGHT TO THE REALM!

QUICKLY, GOOD COMRADES--WE MUST HASTEN TO THE **CATACOMBS** BENEATH THE CITY, AND TAKE UP THE **CHASE!**

AND **WOE** BE UNTO ODIN'S ABDUCTORS WHEN AT LAST WE **FIND** THEM!

DEEP IN THE DESOLATE **WASTE-LANDS** BEYOND THE CITY IMPERIAL, THERE IS A **CAVE** UNLIKE ANY **OTHER**--

--FOR THIS IS THE MYSTERIOUS DWELLING PLACE OF THE NORN QUEEN CALLED **KARNILLA!**

ONE **APPROACHES** THIS CAVERN MOST CAREFULLY--FOR IT IS SAID THAT THOSE WHO ENTER HERE **UNINVITED** ARE NEVER KNOWN TO **LEAVE...**

NAY, THUNDER GOD--I KNOW **NOTHING** OF THE TWO STORM GIANTS WHO BESET THEE!

AFTER ALL, I HAVE MINE OWN EVER-FAITHFUL **BARBARICS** TO DEFEND MY LAND!

AND WHAT OF THE NOBLE **BALDER** THEN?

WHAT *OF* HIM? WHEN LOKI SUGGESTED I *RETURN* TO MY DARK DOMAIN, I BADE BRAVE BALDER *ACCOMPANY* ME...

...BUT HE *REFUSED*, SAYING HIS PLACE WAS BESIDE THE GOLDEN *THRONE*, WATCHING *O'ER* IT AS THOU HADST COMMANDED HIM!

YET WHEN WE ENTERED THE PALACE IMPERIAL, THE BRAVE ONE WAS NOWHERE TO BE *SEEN!*

I *SWEAR* TO THEE, WITCH-WOMAN-- IF THOU DOST *HIDE* THE NOBLE BALDER FROM US...

GUARD THY *TONGUE*, THUNDER GOD-- LEST IT BE TURNED TO *STONE!* FOR THOUGH THERE MAY BE *MANY* WHO WOULD WISH BRAVE BALDER *ILL*...

...THOU COULDST *NE'ER* COUNT KARNILLA *AMONGST* THEM!

OBSERVATION: IF THE ONE CALLED *BALDER* IS INDEED NOT *HERE*, MY FRIENDS-- IT WOULD BE WISE TO SEEK HIM *ELSEWHERE!*

CONCLUSION: I, FOR ONE, THINK LOKI IS *LYING!*

AYE, RECORDER-- *THINE* OPINION ECHOES MINE *OWN!*

METHINKS THERE BE SOME GREAT *MISCHIEF* ABORNING HERE--AND UNDOUBTEDLY, MY *BROTHER* IS AT THE *ROOT* OF IT!

MILADY...FRIEND RECORDER...GET YE *BACK* TO THE CITY ROYAL AS *SWIFTLY* AS IS POSSIBLE!

FOR THE SAKE OF OMNIPOTENT *ODIN* AND THE GOLDEN REALM *ITSELF*, I SHALL GO ON *AHEAD* OF YE...

...AS ONLY HE WHO WIELDS ENCHANTED MJOLNIR *CAN!!*

WHILE, DEEP WITHIN THE VERY **BOWELS** OF IMMORTAL **ASGARD**...

THE TRAIL OF **FOOTPRINTS** WE ESPIED IN THE DUST LEADS **THIS** WAY, MY FRIENDS -- PAST THESE TROLL-BUILT **GENERATORS!**

IT APPEARS A **BEING** OF GREAT SIZE AND POWER HATH CARRIED A BURDEN MOST **HEAVY** THROUGH HERE!

AND THIS **ROPE** DROPPED BY THE WAYSIDE -- IT STILL **TINGLES** WITH THE AFTERTOUCH OF FORCES **ARCANE!**

METHINKS THERE BE NO **QUESTION** WHOM WE **DEAL** WITH HERE!

THE **ENCHANTRESS** AND THE **EXECUTIONER!!**

INDEED! AND WHEN WE **FIND** THEM, THOU SHALT **SEE** WHY VOLSTAGG'S MERE **PRESENCE** MAKES WOMEN **SWOON** AND BRAVE MEN QUAKE WITH **FEAR!**

THEN **NOW** IS THE TIME TO **PROVE** THY CLAIM, VAST ONE -- FOR OUR GRIM FOEMEN NOW **APPROACHETH!**

CURSE THE LUCK! 'TIS THE THUNDER GOD'S THREE **COMPANIONS!** BUT THE TIME BE NOT RIGHT FOR US TO **FACE** THEM NOW!

QUICKLY, ENCHANTRESS -- WE MUST **FLEE!**

NAY, BRUTISH ONE! SO LONG AS HOGUN'S BLADE BE **SWIFT,** AND HIS EYE BE **TRUE** --

--THOU ART GOING **NOWHERE!!**

BY THE NORN! THE GRIM ONE'S **DAGGER** HATH PINNED MY **TUNIC** TO THE WALL!?!

THUK!

AND IN THE INSTANT **BEFORE** THE AWESOME EXECUTIONER CAN **FREE** HIMSELF--

--FANDRAL AND HOGUN ARE **UPON** HIM!

MONSTROUS **KNAVE!** WHAT HAST THOU **DONE** WITH THE SLEEPING **ODIN?**

'TIS A QUESTION THOU SHALT NOT **LIVE** LONG ENOUGH TO **ANSWER**, FOOLS!

IN A MOMENT, MY SORCERY SHALL **TRANS-FORM** THEE INTO...

PFAH! THINE ENCHANTMENTS ARE NO **MATCH** FOR MINE OWN FABLED **BATTLE PROWESS!**

WHUMP

AWAY, THOU OVER-STUFFED **MUTTON-SACK!** THINE AWESOME **GIRTH** DOTH THREATEN TO **SQUEEZE** THE VERY **BREATH** FROM ME!

FEAR **NOT,** ENCHANTRESS! THERE BE NO WARRIOR IN ALL THE REALM ETERNAL WHO IS MINE **EQUAL IN BATTLE!**

I SHALL **FINISH** THESE KNAVES **SWIFTLY,** AND THEN I SHALL **FREE** THEE FROM...

NAY.

MINE OWN VIOLENT ACTIONS HATH THROWN ME **OFF-BALANCE!!**

I TOPPLE HELPLESSLY INTO ONE OF THE RAGING **FIRE-PITS!**

YON **CROSS-BRACE** BE MINE ONLY **HOPE--!**

MAINTAIN THY **GRIP,** EXECUTIONER-- AND WE SHALL PULL THEE TO **SAFETY!**

AYE, BRUTISH ONE-- ONCE THOU HAST **TOLD** US THE ALL-FATHER'S **WHERE-ABOUTS!**

NAY! UNFORGIVING LOKI WILL HAVE OUR HEARTS IF THE EXECUTIONER DOTH ANSWER!

I MUST MOVE SWIFTLY-- ERE ALL BE LOST!

THUS I SAY THEE-- AWAY, MOST MOUNTAINOUS ONE!

ZOUNDS!

THY VERY TOUCH FILLS ME WITH REVULSION!

HAVE FAITH, EXECUTIONER! A MOMENT MORE, AND I SHALL FREE THEE FROM THY DIRE PREDICAMENT!

HOLD FAST, AND I SHALL...

EH?

BY ODIN! THE SORCERESS STUMBLED O'ER THY DAGGER, HOGUN, AND PLUMMETED INTO THE FIRE-PIT-- CARRYING THE EXECUTIONER WITH HER... TO THEIR DOOM!

MY DAGGER, DIDST THOU SAY, FANDRAL?

AAAIIEEEE

NOW I WONDER HOW THAT GOT THERE?

I SHALL MISS THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE EXECUTIONER... BUT NOT GREATLY! THEY HAD, AFTER ALL, ALREADY SERVED THEIR PURPOSE.

BUT NOW THAT THE THUNDER GOD'S CURSED COMPANIONS KNOW OF THE ALL-FATHER'S ABDUCTION, IT COULD COMPLICATE MATTERS!

METHINKS THE TIME HATH COME TO PLAY MY MOST DANGEROUS GAMBIT!

THE **DUNGEONS** DEEP BENEATH THE PALACE IMPERIAL ARE **OLD**, CRACKED AND RUTTED WITH THE WEIGHT OF THEIR **YEARS** AND THE COUNTLESS **SORROWS** THEY HAVE SEEN...

...BUT PERHAPS THE **GREATEST** SORROW OF ALL LURKS WITHIN THIS NIGHTDARK **PIT!**

FOR, **THIS** IS THE CURRENT DWELLING PLACE OF **BALDER THE BRAVE!**

LONG HAVE I GONE **WITHOUT** FOOD OR DRINK, AND THUS, WITH EACH PASSING MOMENT, I GROW EVER **WEAKER**...

...BUT 'TIS NOT MINE **OWN** PLIGHT THAT DOTH FILL ME WITH SUCH **GRIEF!**

'TIS THE KNOWLEDGE THAT I **FAILED** MY NOBLE **PRINCE** IN MY GIVEN **DUTY!**

THE MIGHTY THOR DID CHARGE ME TO **PROTECT** THE GOLDEN THRONE IN HIS ABSENCE--

--YET WHEN **KARNILLA** AND I ATTEMPTED TO **INFILTRATE** THE MYSTERIOUS **ARMY** THAT HAD LAID SEIGE TO IMMORTAL ASGARD...

...WE WERE DUPED INTO FOLLOWING ONE WHO PROFESSED TO BE THE **GOD OF THUNDER**...

"...BUT WHO **WAS**, IN FACT, **KRODA THE DUELLIST**, TRANSFORMED BY LOKI'S **MAGIC!**

"**KRODA**--WHO TREACHEROUSLY FELLED US **BOTH!**"

WITH THE ENCHANTRESS'S **AID**, LOKI ERASED THE **MEMORY** OF WHAT HAD OCCURRED FROM THE NORN QUEEN'S **MIND**, AND SENT HER ON HER WAY BACK TO...

EH? THAT BLINDING **LIGHT**--! WHO **GOES** THERE?

BUT THE WEAK AND WEARY WARRIOR RECEIVES NO **REPLY**--SAVE THE SUDDEN **GRIP** OF POWERFUL HANDS, WHICH CARRY HIM ROUGHLY FROM THE DARKENED CHAMBER.

AND THOUGH THE NOBLE BALDER STRUGGLES **AGAINST** THEM... HE STRUGGLES IN **VAIN!**

SOON AFTER, IN THE SELF-SAME **THRONE ROOM** WHERE OUR SAGA **BEGAN**...

LOKI! I DEMAND **WORDS** WITH THEE, MY BROTHER-- AND THEY SHALL BE **HARSH** WORDS INDEED!

SO--THE PRODIGAL THUNDER GOD **RETURNS!**

IS THERE SOMETHING I CAN **DO** FOR THEE, MOST NOBLE THOR?

THOU CANST **CEASE** THY LYING WAYS, THOU BASE BETRAYER--AND TELL ME WHERE I CAN **FIND** THE MISSING **BALDER!**

THEN THOU HAST BEGUN TO REALIZE THE **TRUTH** OF THE SITUATION AT LAST, I TAKE IT!

NOT THAT THERE IS ANY-THING THOU CANST **DO** ABOUT IT, OF COURSE!

THINE OVERCONFIDENCE SHALL BE THINE **UN-DOING**, EVIL ONE! **ANSWER** ME, OR MYSTIC **MJOLNIR** SHALL... **EH?**

THAT **SOUND**-- DRAWING **CLOSER**--!

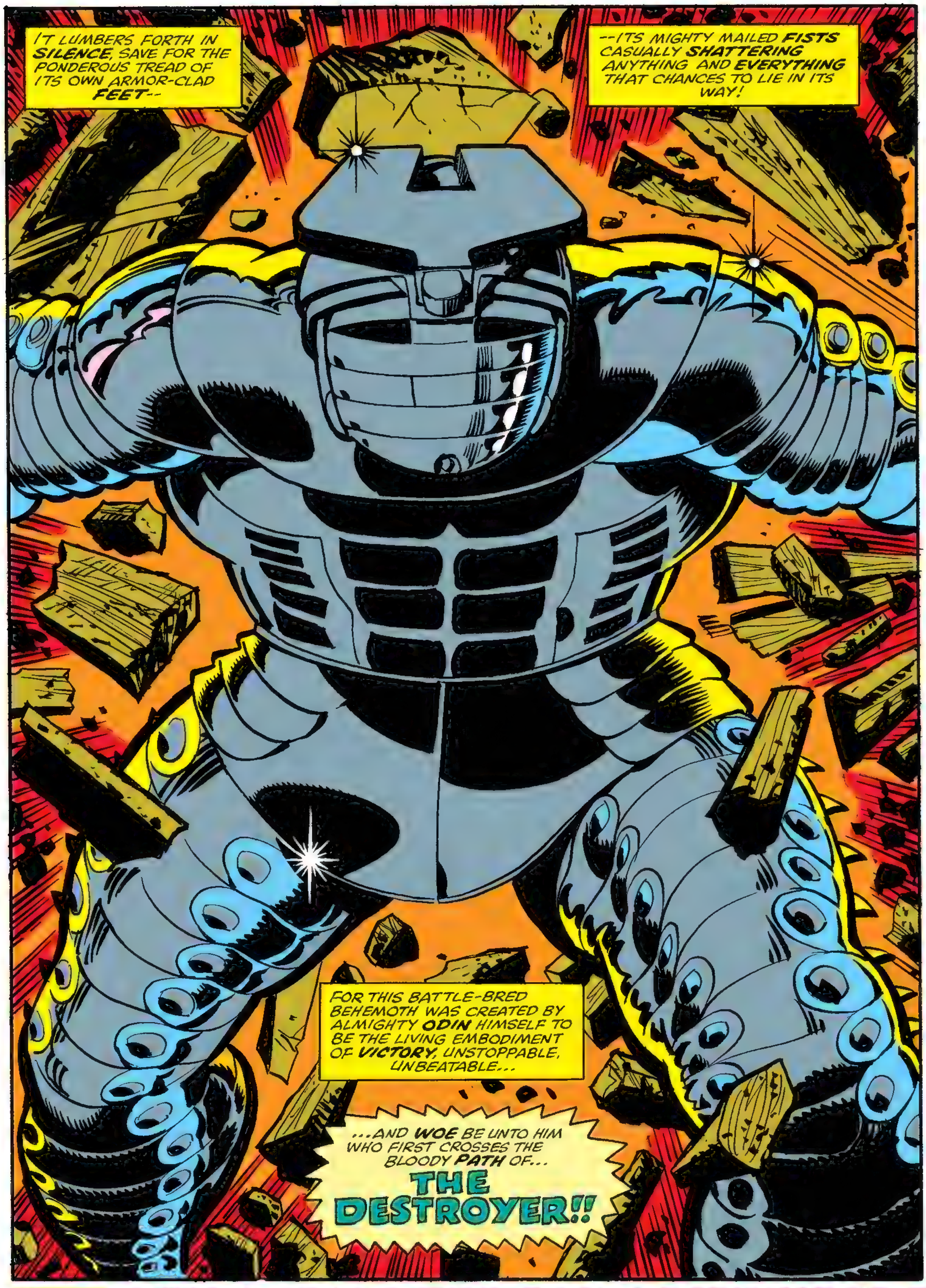
'TIS THE SOUND OF **DESTRUCTION INCARNATE**, THUNDER GOD! STAND AND **CONFRONT** IT AT THY **PERIL!**

BUT **I**, FOR ONE, DO NOT INTEND TO STAY AND **INVITE** MINE OWN UNTIMELY **DEMISE!**

THE GOD OF MISCHIEF HATH **VANISHED**-- LEAVING ONLY THE BITTER STENCH OF **BRIMSTONE** BEHIND, AS **BEFITS** HIM!

BUT THE SOUND OF HEAVY **FOOT-STEPS** YET DRAWS EVER **CLOSER**-- UNTIL THIS VERY ROOM BEGINS TO **TREMBLE!**

BY ODIN, WHAT MANNER OF **MENACE** DRAWS NIGH?


IT LUMBERS FORTH IN SILENCE, SAVE FOR THE PONDEROUS TREAD OF ITS OWN ARMOR-CLAD FEET--
--ITS MIGHTY MAILED FISTS CASUALLY SHATTERING ANYTHING AND EVERYTHING THAT CHANCES TO LIE IN ITS WAY!
FOR THIS BATTLE-BRED BEHEMOTH WAS CREATED BY ALMIGHTY ODIN HIMSELF TO BE THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF VICTORY, UNSTOPPABLE, UNBEATABLE...
...AND WOE BE UNTO HIM WHO FIRST CROSSES THE BLOODY PATH OF...
THE DESTROYER!!

NEXT ISSUE: **WHEN FALLS THE GOD OF THUNDER..!**

THOU SHALT BE HERE, RIGHT?

THOR ®

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THE DEADLY DESTROYER VERSUS

THE MIGHTY

THOR ®

WHEN FALLS THE GOD OF THUNDER!

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!®

LEN WEIN *WRITER/EDITOR* ✶ WALT SIMONSON *ILLUSTRATOR* ✶ GLYNIS WEIN *COLORIST* ✶ JOE ROSEN *LETTERER* ✶ WELCOME BACK ALL JOE SINNOTT *GUEST EMBELLISHER*

WHEN FALLS THE GOD OF THUNDER...!

FOR A MOMENT, HE STANDS **ALONE** IN THE IMPERIAL THRONE ROOM, THE STENCH OF BRIMSTONE--WHICH MARKS THE **DISAPPEARANCE** OF HIS EVIL BROTHER **LOKI**--STILL FILLING THE AIR...

...THEN, ABRUPTLY, HE HEARS THE PONDEROUS **TREAD** OF ARMORED FEET DRAWING **CLOSER**, EVER **CLOSER**--AND THE MIGHTY THOR **WHIRLS**, TO FIND HIMSELF FACING...

THE DESTROYER!!

BUT *HOW* HATH THE INVINCIBLE ONE *RETURNED*? WHEN LAST I *SAW* HIM, HE WAS BOUND FOR DEEPEST *SPACE!* *

THE *ANSWER*, DEAR BROTHER, IS QUITE *SIMPLE!*

EH? AN ARCANE *IMAGE* OF THE VILLAINOUS *LOKI* APPEARS BEFORE ME--

-- *HALTING* THE DESTROYER IN HIS *TRACKS!*

*BACK IN *THOR* #228, -- LEN.

YOU SEE, GOOD THOR, WHEN I GAINED *CONTROL* OF IMMORTAL ASGARD'S GOLDEN *THRONE*, I KNEW I MIGHT SOMEDAY HAVE TO FACE THINE *OPPOSITION*...

"...THUS I SENT MY *MIND* QUESTING OUT ACROSS THE *COSMOS*, UNTIL IT *FOUND* THE MONSTROUS *STARCRAFT* I DID SEEK...

"...THE GALAXY-SPANNING VESSEL OF THE TOWERING *GALACTUS*--

"--HE WHO MUST EVER *CONSUME* THE LIVING ENERGIES OF PLANETS BEYOND NUMBERING IN ORDER TO *SURVIVE!*

"AT THE TIME, GALACTUS WAS LOCKED IN MORTAL COMBAT WITH THE **HIGH EVOLUTIONARY** AND THE **FANTASTIC FOUR**-- OVER THE FATE OF THE WORLD CALLED **COUNTER-EARTH!** *

* CHECK FF #172-175 FOR DETAILS. -- L.

"THUS, NOBODY **NOTICED** AS I LEVITATED THE **DESTROYER**-- WHO WAS THEN GALACTUS'S **HERALD**-- FROM HIS BERTH IN HIS MASTER'S **STARSHIP**...

"...AND TRANSPORTED HIM ONCE MORE BACK TO THE **REALM ETERNAL**, WHERE I RESTORED HIM TO THE VERY **PEAK** OF HIS POWER-- THEN HELD HIM IN **READINESS**, UNTIL SUCH TIME AS HE MIGHT BE **NEEDED!**

"AND METHINKS THAT TIME IS-- **NOW!**"

WITH THAT, THE SHIMMERING **IMAGE** OF THE GOD OF EVIL **FADES** FROM THE BATTLE-TORN **THRONE ROOM**...

...WHILE, IN SOME DARK AND DISTANT **SANCTUARY**, THE PERFIDIOUS PRINCE HIMSELF LIFTS HIS GOBLET **HIGH**...

IT IS **BEGUN**, MY FRIEND! ONCE MORE MY NOBLE **BROTHER** AND MY UNDEFEATABLE **AGENT OF DESTRUCTION** ARE **ALONE** IN THE ROYAL CHAMBER!

AND WHEN THEIR **BATTLE** AT LAST IS **OVER**, ONLY **ONE** OF THEM SHALL EMERGE FROM THAT CHAMBER **ALIVE!**

THEN, THE CRY OF BATTLE RINGING ON HIS LIPS, THE GOD OF THUNDER **HURLS** HIMSELF AT HIS SWIFT-APPROACHING **FOE...**

FOR ODIN!

FOR ASGARD!!

...AND THUS IS THIS BATTLE OF TITANS **JOINED!**

LIKE THE RAGING ENGINE OF DESTRUCTION THAT HE **IS**, THE SILENT DESTROYER **PRESSES** HIS ASSAULT--

BROK!

--**FELLING** THE MIGHTY **THOR!**

BUT THE GOLDEN-HAIRED THUNDER GOD IS EVERY **INCH** HIS FATHER'S **SON**, PROUD, RESOLUTE--

--AND **NO** BEING-- MAN, GOD, OR RAMPAGING **MONSTER**-- CAN AFFRONT THE **PRINCE OF ASGARD**--

--WITHOUT **PAYING** FOR HIS OFFENSE TO THE FULLEST POSSIBLE **MEASURE!**

SHRAKA-BOOM!

I KNOW NOT WHOSE VILE *SPIRIT* NOW GIVES THEE *LIFE*, DESTROYER--

FTOOM!

--NOR WOULD IT TRULY *MATTER* IF I *DID!*

FOR ALL THY LIMITLESS FURY SHALL COME TO *NAUGHT*--

--BEFORE THE POWER OF MINE ENCHANTED MALLET *MJOLNIR!!*

BACK THROUGH THE IMPERIAL ***THRONE ROOM*** *THEY STRUGGLE, SHATTERING* ***EVERYTHING*** *THAT MIGHT CHANCE TO CROSS THEIR* ***PATH***--

--UNTIL THE BATTERED AND BROKEN CHAMBER CAN ***ENDURE*** *THE STRAIN* ***NO LONGER***...

...AND THE VERY ***FLOOR*** *BENEATH THE TWO COMBATANTS SUDDENLY* ***COLLAPSES!***

THOUGH, IN THEIR BLIND ***FURY,*** *THEY HARDLY SEEM TO* ***NOTICE!***

BAKA-ROOOM!

BUT WHILE THOR AND THE DESTROYER TRANSFORM THE PALACE IMPERIAL INTO THEIR OWN PERSONAL **BATTLE-GROUND**, THE SHATTERING **SHOCK WAVES** FROM THEIR CONFLICT SHAKE IMMORTAL ASGARD TO ITS VERY **FOUNDATIONS**...

...WHERE, EVEN NOW, THREE **OTHER** MEMBERS OF OUR STERLING CAST **PROWL** THROUGH THE SMOTHERING **DARKNESS!**

WHERE DOTH THE TWISTING **TRAIL** WE FOLLOW NEXT **LEAD**, DASHING FANDRAL?

NOWHERE I FEAR, GRIM HOGUN! THE DUSTY **FOOTPRINTS** WE PURSUE HATH **FADED!**

'TIS JUST AS **WELL**, METHINKS!

THESE ANCIENT **CATACOMBS** BE FAR TOO **NARROW** FOR ONE OF VALOROUS VOLSTAGG'S HEROIC **STATURE!**

"VERILY, DID WE NOT SEEK THE MISSING **ODIN**, STOLEN FROM HIS VERY **BED-CHAMBER** BY THE EVIL **ENCHANTRESS** AND THE **EXECUTIONER*** --

"--**I**, FOR ONE, WOULD GLADLY TURN AROUND AND SEEK ADVENTURE **ELSEWHERE!**"

*LAST ISH. --LEN.

AS WOULD WE **ALL**, VOLUMINOUS ONE! BUT THE NOBLE THOR HATH CHARGED US WITH THE ALL-FATHER'S **SAFETY**, AND WE MUST...

EH?

STAND THEE **AWAY** FROM THAT **PILLAR**, VOLSTAGG, THOU ART **SHAKING** THIS ENTIRE **TUNNEL!**

BUT FOR ONCE, THE MOUNTAINOUS WARRIOR IS **INNOCENT** OF ANY ACCIDENTAL WRONGDOING, AS THE SHOCK WAVE FROM THE **BATTLE** RAGING SO FAR **ABOVE** THEM FINALLY **HITS**--

--AND HITS WITH A **VENGEANCE!**

AND WHEN THE STARTLED WARRIORS HAVE AT LAST REGAINED THEIR **FEET**...

THAT WAS NO ORDINARY **TREMOR**, MY FRIENDS!

AYE, GRIM ONE! METHINKS SOMETHING IS SORELY **AMISS** IN THE REALM ETERNAL...

...AND WE MUST MAKE **HASTE** IF WE ARE TO SET IT ALL **A'RIGHT!**

WHILE, **ELSEWHERE**...

THE BATTLE GOES EVEN BETTER THAN **EXPECTED**, MY FRIEND! THOU ART PLAYING THY PART TO **PERFECTION!**

OBSERVE MINE ENCHANTED **VIEWSCREEN**--AND WITNESS HOW THE INVINCIBLE CREATURE THY **SPIRIT** NOW INHABITS **OVERWHELMS** THE ACCURSED THUNDER GOD!

VERILY, THIS IS THE BATTLE I HAVE WAITED **EONS** TO BEHOLD--

--THE BATTLE THAT SHALL FINALLY SEE THE BRUTAL **END** OF THE MIGHTY **THOR!!**

BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, JUST OUTSIDE THE CITY'S NORTHERNMOST **GATE**...

EVERYTHING CERTAINLY **APPEARS** NORMAL, LADY SIF.

AYE, NORN QUEEN-- BUT WE KNOW **BETTER!**

WE MUST **HIE** US TO THE PALACE IMPERIAL-- AND **SWIFTLY!**

FOR MORE YEARS THAN THEY CAN **REMEMBER**, BROLTHAR AND ENOK HAVE STOOD **GUARD** AT THE GOLDEN GATES, EVER **VIGILANT**, EVER **ALERT**...

Z Z Z Z Z Z

...EVER PREPARED TO **DEAL** WITH THE **UNEXPECTED!**

GUARDSMAN, OPEN THY **GATES!**

EH?

WH-WHUZZAT?

I SAID **OPEN THY GATES**, ASGARDIANS!

THE **NORN QUEEN** AND HER COMPANIONS SEEK **ENTRANCE!**

NAY, WITCH-WOMAN! THOU CANST NOT PASS WITHOUT PROPER **LEAVE!**

BEGONE WITH THEE, SORCERESS--**BEGONE!**

"**WHAT?** THOU DAREST **CROAK** THUS TO THE ALL-POWERFUL **QUEEN OF THE NORNS?**

ZAK!

"THEN--**SO BE IT!**

"IF THOU WOULDST **ACT** THE PART OF **TOADIES**-- THEN THOU SHOULDST **LOOK** THE PART AS WELL!"

RIBBIT!

BUT EVEN AS THE NORN QUEEN, THE LADY SIF, AND THE ENIGMATIC **RECORDER** RACE THROUGH THE **CITY**, THE BATTLE WITHIN THE CASTLE RAMPARTS **GOES ON**--

SKROOM!

--AND IT DOES NOT GO **WELL** FOR THE VALIANT **THOR!**

HIS CRIMSON CLOAK IN **TATTERS**, HIS WINGED BATTLE-HELMET **LOST** BENEATH SOME FALLEN RUBBLE, THE GOD OF THUNDER **REELS** BEFORE THE DESTROYER'S RELENTLESS **ASSAULT**--

--AND THE PALACE IMPERIAL FALLS INTO **RUIN** ALL ABOUT THEM!

HE GIVES ME NO **RESPITE**--NO PAUSE TO CATCH MY **BREATH!**

MINE EVERY BONE FEELS **BRITTLE**...MINE EVERY SINEW **ACHES**...BUT STILL I MUST **RISE** AGAIN!

I... MUST... **RISE!!**

SLOWLY, PAINFULLY, THE SON OF ODIN STAGGERS TO HIS **KNEES**--EVEN AS HIS ARMORED FOE RAISES HIS MAILED **FIST** TO DELIVER A KILLING **BLOW**...

...BUT IT IS A BLOW UNEXPECTEDLY **TURNED ASIDE!**

SPLOW!

THINE ANGRY MACE STRUCK **TRUE**, GRIM HOGUN! NOW LET US SEE IF FANDRAL'S FLASHING **BLADE** CAN STRIKE WITH **EQUAL** FERVOR!

FOR THE SAKE OF THE NOBLE **THUNDER GOD**--FOR THE SAFETY OF ALL THE **REALM ETERNAL**--

ATTACK, GOOD COMRADES--

ATTACK!!

EYES **BLAZING**, THE WARRIORS THREE **LEAP** INTO THE FRAY...

HAVE **AT** THEE, MONSTROUS ONE!

SHAKK!

...YET STILL THEY SEEM ALMOST **BENEATH** THE DREAD DESTROYER'S **NOTICE**, AS HE **TURNS** FOR AN INSTANT FROM THE FALLEN **THOR**...

...TO DIRECT THE FULL PRIMORDIAL **FURY** OF HIS MATCHLESS POWER AT THESE **NEW** DIVERSIONS!

AND, WITH BUT A SINGLE **GESTURE**, THE ANNOYING FLEAS ARE **SWATTED!**

BY HELA-- **NAY!**

A MOMENT **LONGER**-- AND THAT ACCURSED CREATURE SHALL **DESTROY** MY NOBLE **COMRADES!**

BUT SO LONG AS THE BOUNDLESS **STRENGTH** WHICH IS MY BIRTH-RIGHT STILL **SWELLS** MY WEARY **ARMS**--

--THAT SHALT NOT BE!!

SKKRAKKT!

AND, LIKE A TOPPLING **REDWOOD**, THE ORNATE PILLAR CRASHES TO THE MARBLED **FLOOR**--

--**SEPARATING** THE GRIM DESTROYER FROM THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS FRIENDS!

KRA-KOOM!

IN ODIN'S NAME, GOOD COMRADES-- WHAT ART THOU *DOING* HERE?

DESPITE THE *BATTLE* NOW RAGING, THY *PLACE* IS AT THE SIDE OF OUR SLEEPING *MONARCH!*

WHICH IS WHERE WE *WOULD* BE, NOBLE PRINCE-- WERE IT AT ALL *POSSIBLE!*

EH? WHAT *MEANST* THOU, FANDRAL?

*AND WHEN THE WOEFUL WARRIOR HAS **EXPLAINED** THE ALL-FATHER'S **ABDUCTION**...*

THOUGH THINE AID IS EVER *WELCOME*, MY FRIENDS, THE DESTROYER IS TRULY A FOE *BEYOND* THY POWER TO *COMBAT!*

IF THE REALM IS TO *ENDURE*, THOU MUST *FIND* THE MISSING *ODIN*--

--FOR ONLY *HE* CAN PUT AN *END* TO THE MONSTROUS ONE'S *RAMPAGE!*

"FAFNIR'S BLOOD! THE DESTROYER SETS THE FALLEN *RUBBLE* BE-TWEEN US TO *SIZZLING* IN HIS FURY!

"A MOMENT *LONGER*-- AND HE SHALL *BURST THROUGH!*"

THEN THOU MUST GO *NOW*, NOBLE WARRIORS-- WHILST STILL THERE BE *TIME!*

IN SANITY'S NAME, I BID THEE-- *GO!!*

DIDST THOU NOT *HEAR* THE THUNDER GOD, MY FRIENDS?

FOLLOW ME-- AND VALOROUS VOLSTAGG SHALL LEAD THEE ON TO *VICTORY!*

METHINKS THE VAST ONE WAS *MORE* CONCERNED WITH LEADING US TO THE NEAREST *EXIT!*

AYE, HOGUN-- ALREADY THE *BATTLE* BEGINS ANEW *BEHIND* US!

BUT OUR *DUTY*, GOOD FANDRAL, LIES *AHEAD!*

YET-- *HOLD!*

WHO BE THOSE THREE SHADOWY FIGURES, WHO STAND AND *CONFER* IN SUCH HUSHED TONES, WHERE ALL OTHERS HATH *FLED*?

WHO STANDS WITHIN SIGHT AND SOUND OF THE *BATTLE*, YET DOES NAUGHT TO *AID* THE MOST WORTHY *THOR*?

THEY **ARE** (FROM LEFT TO RIGHT) **SNAYKAR** THE SKULKER, **MAGRAT** THE SCHEMER, AND THE COLD-BLOODED **KRODA** THE DUELLIST--

--AND WHAT THEY ARE **PLOTTING** HERE IS NOT FOR SENSITIVE EARS TO **HEAR**...

METHINKS THINGS GO NOT *NEARLY* AS WELL AS LOKI HAD **PROMISED** US, MY FRIENDS.

IF LOKI **FAILS**, AND ODIN ONCE MORE ASCENDS THE GOLDEN THRONE, OUR FATES ARE MOST CERTAINLY **SEALED!**

BUT MAYHAP THERE MIGHT *YET* BE A WAY TO **SAVE** OUR COLLECTIVE **SKINS**--

--IF WE MAKE **HASTE** TO THE ALL-FATHER'S **HIDING PLACE!**

AYE, MAGRAT, I SEE THE **WISDOM** OF THY SCHEME! IF WE **FREE** THE SLEEPING ODIN, WE GAIN **FAVOR** IN HIS EYES...

INDEED, KRODA!

...OR, IF NEED BE, WE CAN **SLAY** HIM ERE HE **WAKES!**

EITHER WAY, OUR TROUBLES WILL BE **OVER!**

NAY, MOST MALEVOLENT ONES--THY TROUBLES ARE ONLY **BEGINNING!**

STEALTHILY, THE WARRIORS THREE **FOLLOW** LOKI'S TRAITOROUS HENCHMEN DOWN INTO THE TWISTING **CATACOMBS** BENEATH THE REALM ETERNAL, WHERE ALL **SIX** ARE ULTIMATELY LOST FROM **SIGHT**...

...EVEN AS THE DREAD DESTROYER HAS LOST SIGHT OF THE MIGHTY **THOR**, HERE IN THE PALACE ROYAL'S FABLED **HALL OF HEROES!**

SLOWLY, CAUTIOUSLY, ITS EVERY RAZOR-SHARP SENSE **ALERT** FOR THE SLIGHTEST SIGN OF ITS **ENEMY**, THE ARMOR-CLAD DESTROYER PROWLS PAST THE HALLOWED STATUES OF THOSE WHO HAVE GIVEN THEIR VERY **LIVES** FOR IMMORTAL **ASGARD**...

...UNTIL, AS THE BATTLE-BRED BEHEMOTH LUMBERS **PAST** THE GLEAMING LIKENESS OF ONE WHO **FELL** IN ODIN'S SERVICE CENTURIES AGONE...

VARLET, THOU DIDST NOT **DETECT** ME HERE--CROUCHED BEHIND THIS TOWERING **STATUE** UNTIL THE MOMENT WAS RIGHT TO **STRIKE!**

SKRA-KOOM!

AND THAT MOMENT, AT LAST, IS-- **NOW!!**

OD'S BLOOD! ENCHANTED MJOLNIR HATH **BURIED** THE DESTROYER 'NEATH COUNTLESS TONS OF **STATUARY**--

--YET **STILL** THE INDESTRUCTIBLE ONE STRUGGLES TO **REACH** ME!

THROOM!

FOUR TIMES **BEFORE** HAVE I FACED THE DESTROYER--

--YET **NEVER** HAVE I SEEN HIM MORE **RELENTLESS,** MORE FILLED WITH SUCH **KILLING FURY!**

"IN TIMES PAST, MANY DIFFERENT *SPIRITS* HATH BREATHED *LIFE* INTO THE DESTROYER'S SOULLESS *SHELL*...

"...A NAMELESS *HUNTER*...MILADY *SIF*...THE EARTHLY PROFESSOR *CLEMENT HOLMES*...EVEN THE UNSCRUPULOUS *LOKI* HIMSELF*...

BROK!

*IN *THOR* #118-119, #150-152, #224-225, & *THOR KING-SIZE SPECIAL* #2, RESPECTIVELY. --LEN.

...BUT IF MINE EVIL *HALF-BROTHER* DOTH ANIMATE THE DESTROYER NOW, SURELY HE WOULD *VOICE* HIS ANIMOSITY!

NAY, THERE BE *MORE* TO THIS THAN I AS YET *UNDERSTAND!*

BUT I MUST NOT ALLOW *CONFUSION* TO CLOUD MY JUDGMENT, LEST THE ARMORED ONE BECOME THE VERY *DEATH* OF ME!

WHOEVER THOU ART, DESTROYER, THE SON OF ODIN IS STILL THY *BETTER!*

BUT EVEN AS THE FURIOUS THUNDER GOD *THROWS* HIMSELF AT HIS SILENT ADVERSARY--

--A BOLT OF ELDRITCH *ENERGY* ERUPTS FROM THE DESTROYER'S HAND, *HALTING* THE MIGHTY THOR IN *MID-AIR*...

...THEN, ALMOST *CASUALLY*, HURLING HIM HELPLESSLY BACK ACROSS THE *CHAMBER*--

--TO PLUNGE INTO ONE OF THE ORNATE *FOUNTAINS* THAT SURROUND THE PALACE ROYAL'S MAGNIFICENT *INDOOR GARDENS!*

SPLOOSH!

I...I HAD FORGOTTEN THE **SCOPE** OF THY POWERS, DESTROYER! 'TWAS MOST **FOOLISH** OF ME!

BUT I SHALL **NOT** MAKE SUCH AN ERROR **AGAIN!**

INDEED **NOT**, THUNDER GOD! FOR, IN AN INSTANT, THE DESTROYER IS **UPON** YOU, HOLDING YOUR GOLDEN-MANED **HEAD** BENEATH THE FROTHING **FOUNTAIN**--

--UNTIL YOUR **EYES** GROW WIDE WITH **STRAIN**, AND YOUR **LUNGS** FEEL FILLED WITH LIQUID **FIRE!**

BUT EVEN AS THE WORLD BEGINS TO GROW **BLACK** AROUND YOU, THE SOUND OF A SHOUTING **VOICES** PIERCES THE CHURNING WATERS, A VOICE THAT ABRUPTLY FILLS YOU WITH RENEWED **HOPE**...

DESTROYER, **UNHAND** MY BELOVED!

UNHAND HIM **NOW**, I SAY THEE-- LEST I CLEAVE THEE IN **TWAIN!**

A WORTHY **THREAT**, GODDESS-- BUT BEWARE THE ARMORED ONE'S **POWER!**

THOU SPEAKEST **A'RIGHT**, NORN QUEEN! MINE ASSAULT HATH DONE LITTLE MORE THAN **ANNOY** HIM!

IF WE ARE TO **DEFEAT** THE DESTROYER, I SHALL REQUIRE THINE **AID!**

THEN STAND THEE **ASIDE**, SIF-- AND LET **KARNILLA** DEAL WITH THE UNSTOPPABLE ONE

VERILY, **NOW** SHALT THE DESTROYER BE **DESTROYED!**

WHISPERING ARCANE **ENCHANTMENTS** KNOWN ONLY TO THE **NORNS**, THE WITCH-WOMAN **KARNILLA** RAISES HER SLENDER **HANDS**--

--AND SENDS BLOSSOMS OF UNIMAGINABLE **FORCE** STREAKING ACROSS THE CHAMBER, ENVELOPING THE DESTROYER IN A BALL OF ENERGY THAT STAGGERS EVEN **HIM**...

...BUT IT IS THE **NORN QUEEN** WHO FEELS THE GREATEST **AGONY!**

NAY.

BY THE FATES-- IT CANNOT **BE**--!!

AND, REMARKABLY, KARNILLA **CEASES** HER ASSAULT--

--**BEFORE** IT CAN DO THE DESTROYER ANY FURTHER **HARM!**

BY MY **TROTH**, LOKI SHALL **PAY** FOR THIS!

AND, WITHOUT THE NORN QUEEN'S ENCHANTMENTS TO **RESTRAIN** HIM, THE DESTROYER **TURNS** ONCE MORE TO THE STILL-STAGGERED **THUNDER GOD!**

QUICKLY, KARNILLA-- **RENEW** THY MYSTIC **ATTACK!** 'TIS OUR OUR ONLY HOPE OF **HALTING** THE DESTROYER ERE HE **SLAYS** THE MIGHTY **THOR!**

THOUGH I HAVE PROMISED THEE MINE **AID**, GODDESS-- I CANNOT RAISE A **HAND** AGAINST THE RAMPAGING DESTROYER!

FORGIVE ME-- BUT I SIMPLY **CANNOT!**

METHINKS THE LOVELY KARNILLA HATH AT LAST DISCOVERED THY **SECRET**, MY FRIEND --

--AND IT HATH RENDERED HER **IMPOTENT** AGAINST THEE, AS I HAD **PLANNED!**

AFTER ALL, HOW CAN SHE UNLEASH HER ARCANE *POWERS* AGAINST THE ONE MAN IN ALL THE UNIVERSE SHE PROFESSES TO *LOVE?*

HOW CAN THE NORN QUEEN DO *ANYTHING,* WHEN THE SPIRIT THAT POSSESSES THE BODY OF THE *DESTROYER* IS THE SPIRIT OF... **BALDER THE BRAVE!**

NEXT ISSUE: **"SO FALLS THE REALM ETERNAL!"**

VERILY, THOU SHALT BE HERE!

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THE MIGHTY

THOR®

UNHAND ME, BROTHER! I MUST REACH THE DESTROYER!

NAY! IF EVIL LOKI TOUCHES THE ARMORED ONE-- ASGARD IS DOOMED!

S/S

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

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LEN WEIN ✶ WRITER / EDITOR | WALT SIMONSON & TONY DeZUNIGA ✶ ARTISTS / ILLUSTRATORS | GLYNIS WEIN ✶ COLORIST | JOE ROSEN ✶ LETTERER

...SO FALLS THE REALM ETERNAL!

FOR THOSE WHO CAME IN LATE:

THROUGH ANCIENT **CATACOMBS**, FANDRAL, HOGUN AND VOLSTAGG SILENTLY **PURSUE** THREE VILE VILLAINS, IN HOPES OF BEING **LED** TO THE KIDNAPPED **ODIN**...

...AS, THROUGH THE PALACE IMPERIAL, THE MIGHTY **THOR** STRUGGLES DESPERATELY AGAINST THE SUPREMELY-POWERFUL **DESTROYER**...

...WHILE THE ONLY BEINGS WHO MIGHT **AID** THE BATTERED THUNDER GOD WATCH ON IN HELPLESS **HORROR**, UNABLE TO **ACT**...

...FOR THE SPIRIT THAT **ANIMATES** THE MONSTROUS DESTROYER, AT EVIL LOKI'S **COMMAND**, IS THE HEROIC SPIRIT OF **BALDER THE BRAVE!**

OTHER THAN **THAT**, NOTHING MUCH IS REALLY **GOING ON** RIGHT NOW.

NE'ER HATH A VICTORY TASTED MORE **SWEET**, GOOD BALDER!

ONLY **TWO** SAVE LOKI POSSESS **POWER** ENOW TO **DEFEAT** THE DESTROYER--

--BUT THE NORN QUEEN **KARNILLA** STAYS HER HAND FOR FEAR OF **HARMING** THY NOBLE **SPIRIT**...

"...WHILST ALMIGHTY **ODIN**, HIS VERY **LIFE-FORCE** DRAINED DURING HIS INTER-STELLAR TRAVELS, STILL SLEEPS THE FABLED **ODIN-SLEEP**--

"--THOUGH HE RESTS NOW IN A HIDDEN **CAVERN** OF MINE OWN CHOOSING, WHERE THE MYSTICAL **MISTS OF MORPHEUS** SHALL MAKE HIS SLEEP QUITE **PERMANENT!**"

AYE, EVEN **NOW**, THE RAGING BATTLE GOES **AGAINST** MY SELF-RIGHTEOUS HALF-BROTHER--

--AND WHEN THE FURIOUS **THOR** HATH AT LAST BEEN **CRUSHED** 'NEATH THE DESTROYER'S ARMORED **HEEL**--

--THE GOLDEN **THRONE** OF IMMORTAL ASGARD SHALL BE **MINE ALONE**...

...**FOREVER!!**

*WHILE, IN THE BATTLE-TORN **IMPERIAL GARDENS**...*

VERILY, MY WEARY MIND DOTH ROIL IN **CONFUSION!**

FOR THOUGH KARNILLA, THE RECORDER, AND MINE OWN GOOD **LADY SIF** KNOW FULL WELL WHAT THE DESTROYER CAN **DO** TO THE REALM ETERNAL--

--THEY STAND SILENTLY BY, AND RAISE NOT A HAND TO **OPPOSE** HIM!

WHY? IN ODIN'S NAME-- **WHY??**

WHY: THE QUESTION ECHOES AND RE-ECHOES THROUGH THE THUNDER GOD'S THOUGHTS, AS HE AND HIS ARMORED ADVERSARY SLOWLY REDUCE THE ANCIENT BATTLEMENTS AROUND THEM TO SO MUCH GLEAMING RUBBLE--

--BUT EACH ASKING BRINGS ONLY MORE QUESTIONS...

FORGIVE ME, GOOD SIF-- FOR THOUGH I PROMISED TO AID THEE, THERE IS NAUGHT I CAN DO...

...LEST MINE OWN SOUL BE FORFEIT!

BUT WITHOUT SOME AID, MY BELOVED SHALL SOON PERISH!

RECORDER, CANST THOU HELP?

OBSERVATION: THOUGH THE ENERGY-FIELD WHICH SURROUNDS ME IS STRONG ENOUGH TO PROTECT MY DERMA-CIRCUITS FROM FLYING DEBRIS--

--STILL IT IS NOT NEARLY STRONG ENOUGH TO ASSIST THE EMBATTLED THOR!

PRITHEE, GODDESS--THOU MUST UNDERSTAND MY POSITION! THERE ARE FORCES AT WORK HERE FAR BEYOND THY COMPREHENSION!

NAY, SORCERESS-- 'TIS THOU WHO DOST NOT UNDERSTAND! I WOULD GLADLY GIVE MY LIFE FOR THE GOD OF THUNDER!

BUT HOW CAN I EXPLAIN SUCH THINGS TO ONE INCAPABLE OF EVER FEELING LOVE?

TRULY, THINE ANGRY WORDS HURT ME, GODDESS!

FOR THOUGH KARNILLA BE QUEEN OF THE NORNS, FIRST IS SHE A WOMAN--

--AYE, A WOMAN WHO THIRSTS FOR VENGEANCE!

BY ODIN--SHE VANISHES!

AND EVEN AS THE NORN QUEEN **FADES** FROM THE CHAMBER IN **FURY**...

THE DESTROYER'S ARMORED **HANDS**-- THEY BEGIN TO **GLOW** LIKE MINIATURE **SUNS**--!

THOUGH MY BATTERED BODY ACHES FOR **RESPITE**, I MUST MOVE **SWIFTLY**--

--ELSE I MAY **NEVER** MOVE **AGAIN**!

BY THE FATES! THAT WAS ALMOST **TOO** CLOSE!

THE ARMORED ONE'S CIRCLE OF ARCANE FIRE HATH **SHORN AWAY** MY TATTERED **BATTLE CLOAK**!

WHILE, IN HIS DISTANT **SANCTUARY**...

THE THUNDER GOD'S **ENDURANCE** IS TRULY **REMARKABLE**!

ANY **LESSER** BEING WOULD HAVE **FALLEN** BEFORE THE DESTROYER'S ONSLAUGHT **LONG** AGO!

BUT NOT EVEN THE MIGHTY **THOR** CAN CONTINUE THUS **FOREVER**, AND WHEN HE DOTH **PERISH**...

BUT HE SHALL **NOT** PERISH, EVIL ONE--!

EH?

--NOT SO LONG AS I POSSESS **POWER** ENOW TO **PREVENT** IT!!

AARRGGHH!!

NOW **TURN**, THOU MOST VILE PRINCE OF EVIL--AND FACE THE RIGHTEOUS **WRATH** OF THE NORN QUEEN **KARNILLA**!

AYE, TURN AND **FACE** ME, INSIDIOUS ONE--IF TRULY THOU DOST **DARE**!!

WHILE, IN THE TWISTING **CATACOMBS** BENEATH THE REALM ETERNAL, THREE MALEVOLENT FIGURES PROWL THROUGH THE **DARKNESS**--AND SCHEME THEIR SINISTER **SCHEMES**...

ART THOU CERTAIN WE MUST GO **THROUGH** WITH THIS, MAGRAT?

IN TRUTH, SNAYKAR, I SEE NO OTHER **ALTERNATIVE!**

AYE, MY FRIENDS--TOO OFTEN HATH LOKI **FAILED** IN HIS COMPLEX PLANNING FOR US TO **TRUST** IN HIS SEEMING VICTORY **NOW!**

WE MUST TAKE STEPS TO PROTECT OUR **OWN** TENDER SKINS, SHOULD THE PRINCE OF EVIL BE ONCE MORE **DEFEATED!**

THAT IS WHY WE NOW **HASTEN** TO THE HIDDEN CHAMBER WHERE ODIN LIES **SLEEPING**--SO WE MAY **FREE** HIM FROM HIS ARCANE IMPRISONMENT, AND PERHAPS GAIN **FAVOR** IN HIS EYES...

...OR, IF NEED BE, SO THAT WE MAY **SLAY** HIM ERE HE FULLY RECOVERS HIS **STRENGTH!**

EITHER WAY, **OUR** PROBLEMS WILL BE **OVER!**

YET, THOUGH THE ALL-FATHER STILL **SLUMBERS**, IT IS SHEER **FOLLY** TO RAISE OUR HANDS AGAINST ONE WHO CAN **OBLITERATE** US WITH BUT A...

EH?

BEHIND US--! METHINKS I HEARD A **SOUND!**

FOR SEVERAL INTERMINABLE **MOMENTS**, THE THREE STAND **IMMOBILE**, HEARING ONLY THE PERSISTENT **DRIP** OF BRACKISH WATER INTO A NOISOME **POOL**...

...ONLY **THAT**...AND NOTHING **MORE!**

I HEAR **NOTHING**, SNAYKAR!

KRODA SPEAKS **TRUE**, SKULKING ONE...'TWAS MERELY THINE **IMAGI-NATION!**

THEN LET US **PROCEED**, MY FRIENDS!

AND, AT LONG LAST...

IS THAT ODIN'S HIDDEN **CELL** BEFORE US?

AYE, SNAYKAR--'TWAS **HERE** THAT THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE EXE-CUTIONER DID **CONCEAL** ALMIGHTY ODIN ERE THEY MET THEIR **END!***

THEN LET US **UNLOCK** YON TROLL-FORGED **PORTAL**, GOOD COMRADES--

--FOR NOTHING **ELSE** STANDS IN OUR **WAY!**

*TWO ISSUES PAST --LEN.

NOTHING SAY YE, KNAVES?

IS THAT ALL THOU DOST CONSIDER US?

THEN, BY MY TROTH, 'TIS TIME WE TAUGHT YE NOT TO UNDERESTIMATE THY BETTERS!

BWOK!

BY HELA'S DARK TOUCH! 'TIS THE THUNDER GOD'S THREE COMRADES-IN-ARMS!

NAY! IF THEY HAVE PURSUED US TO THE ALL-FATHER'S HIDING PLACE--

--WE ARE UNDONE!!

MAYHAP THE *OTHERS* ARE UNDONE--BUT SO LONG AS THERE BE *SHADOWS* IN WHICH TO *HIDE*, SNAYKAR SHALL BE *FREE* TO...

...UUNNGGHH!!

WHAKK!

FORGET THY *FREEDOM*, SKULKING ONE--AND BE THANKFUL THAT I LEAVE THEE THY *LIFE!*

SURRENDER, MAGRAT--LEST VALIANT VOLSTAGG BE FORCED TO VENT HIS MATCHLESS *WRATH* UPON...

...ZOUNDS!

MOUNTAINOUS *OAF!* NOT FOR *NAUGHT* IS MAGRAT CALLED THE *SCHEMER!*

MY *DEMON-DUST* SHALL DEAL WITH *THEE!*

FIE UPON THY FOUL *MAGICKS*, MAGRAT!

THE LION OF ASGARD SHALL NEVER *SUCCUMB* TO SUCH AS...AH... *AH...AH... AH...*

CHOOO!

AND WITH STUNNING *SUDDENNESS*, THE SCHEMING *MAGRAT* ABRUPTLY BECOMES *ONE* WITH A NEARBY *WALL!*

LONG HAVE I *AWAITED* THIS MOMENT, FANDRAL--THE CHANCE TO PIT *MY* BLADE AGAINST *THINE!*

THEN I SUGGEST THOU KEEPEST THY WEAPON *SHEATHED*, KRODA--

--AND SAVE THYSELF GREAT *EMBARRASSMENT!*

"FOR, THOUGH THY SKILL AS A DUELIST BE *LEGENDARY*--

ZIP

ZIP!

ZIP!

"--THE SKILL OF *FANDRAL* IS *UNMATCHED* IN ALL THE *UNIVERSE!*"

HIS *SWORD*--IT SEEMS TO BE *EVERYWHERE!*

BOK!

JUST BE *GRATEFUL*, KRODA, THAT I SMITE THEE WITH THE *FLAT* OF MY BLADE--NOT THE *POINT* OF IT!

UUNFF!!

SO! ONCE MORE DOTH THE EAGLE OF WARRIORS STAND IN TRIUMPH O'ER HIS FOES!

VERILY, THE MINSTRELS SHALL SING OF THIS DAY!

THEY MAY YET SING OUR DEATH-DIRGE, VOLUMINOUS ONE--

--IF WE DO NOT RESCUE THE CAPTIVE ODIN!

BUT I FEAR YON MONSTROUS BARRICADE WILL NOT BE EASILY BREACHED!

I SAY THEE--PFAH, GOOD COMRADES! THERE IS NAUGHT WHICH CAN LONG WITHSTAND THE MOUNTAINOUS MIGHT OF VOLSTAGG!

AYE, MY FRIEND--THOU MAYEST WELL BE RIGHT!

METHINKS THERE IS A WAY THINE--AH--OVERWHELMING ASSETS CAN BE PUT TO PRODUCTIVE USE HERE!

AND THUS, SHORTLY...

HEAVE, MY BROTHERS--HEAVE, I SAY!

DOST THOU EXPECT VALOROUS VOLSTAGG ALONE TO BEAR THE BULK OF OUR EFFORTS?

BE PATIENT BUT A MOMENT LONGER, VAST ONE--AND KEEP BOUNCING!

AYE, THE CURSED PORTAL BEGINS TO GIVE WAY!

WITH A SUDDEN, SHUDDERING GROAN, THE TOWERING BARRICADE IS SHATTERED, AND THE WARRIORS THREE STEP CAUTIOUSLY INTO THE FUME-FILLED CHAMBER BEYOND...

SOMEWHERE JUST AHEAD, THEY KNOW, LIES THE PRECIOUS OBJECT OF THEIR QUEST--AND THUS, THOUGH THE VERY AIR AROUND THEM IS SICKENINGLY SWEET AND CLOYING, THEY PRESS RESOLUTELY ONWARD...

...UNTIL, AT LAST, THEY ARE SEEMINGLY SWALLOWED BY THE BILLOWING MISTS WHICH SURROUND THEM...

...AND SILENCE HOLDS SWAY OVER ALL!

WHILE...

DEMONS OF THE NORN! IS THERE NO END TO THE DESTROYER'S GRIM POWER?

EVEN NOW, HE DOTH FILL THE AIR AROUND ME WITH CONCENTRATED BURSTS OF THE FABLED KZIPPA PARTICLES--

--WHOSE ANNIHILATING TOUCH NEITHER MAN NOR GOD CAN LONG ENDURE!

THERE IS BUT ONE AVENUE OF ESCAPE LEFT OPEN TO ME--

--THE CHURNING WATERS OF THE IMPERIAL FOUNTAIN!!

SPLASH!

I MUST PUT AS MUCH DISTANCE 'TWIXT MYSELF AND THE DESTROYER AS POSSIBLE--

--AND THUS BUY MYSELF A FEW PRECIOUS MOMENTS TO RECOUP MY RAPIDLY-DWINDLING STRENGTH!

AND, AFTER SEVERAL MINUTES OF FURIOUS SWIMMING...

THANK THE FATES -- I'VE DONE IT!

THE ARMORED ONE IS NOWHERE TO BE SEEN!

BUT EVEN AS THE BATTLE-WEARY THUNDER GOD PULLS HIMSELF FROM THE POOL, HIS BURNING LUNGS STILL GASPING FOR AIR--

--A MOST FAMILIAR ARMORED HAND REACHES OUT TO TOUCH THE PERFUMED WATERS WITH ELECTRIFYING FURY--

--THOUGH IT IS A GESTURE MOST FUTILE!

FOR, HEARING THE FAINT CRACKLE IN THE AIR, THE MIGHTY THOR ABRUPTLY WHIRLS--

SKA-RAKKK!

--AND UPROOTS THE SIZZLING POOL FROM ITS VERY FOUNDATION!

LIKE AN UNLEASHED **TIDAL WAVE**, UNTOLD TONS OF FROTHING WATER **CASCADE** SAVAGELY ACROSS THE CHAMBER, **INUNDAT-ING** THE DEADLY DESTROYER IN AN **INSTANT**--

--BUT WHERE THE CHURNING TORRENT **STRIKES** HIS ARMORED FORM, SEETHING BILLOWS OF **STEAM** RISE UP LIKE IVORY CLOUDS A' BORNING!

WHILE, BACK IN LOKI'S HIDDEN SANCTUARY, A **SECOND** BATTLE RAGES--A BATTLE EQUALLY AS **URGENT**, EQUALLY AS **DESPERATE** AS THE THUNDER GOD'S **OWN!**

RELEASE THE NOBLE BALDER FROM THY HEINOUS **SPELL**, PRINCE OF EVIL!

THOU WOULDST BE FAR **WISER** TO WORRY ABOUT **THYSELF**, NORN QUEEN!

THE ENCHANTED **CIRCLE OF OBLIVION** I HAVE CONJURED NEED ONLY **ENVELOPE** THEE TO **DESTROY** THEE!

BUT **THIS** IT SHALL NEVER **DO**, FIENDISH ONE--SO LONG AS THE POWER OF **KARNILLA** IS ALL BUT **EQUAL** TO THINE **OWN!**

YET IF I SHOULD FALL IN BATTLE, BALDER'S VERY **SPIRIT** MAY ULTIMATELY BE **FORFEIT!**

NAY, I DARE NOT TAKE SUCH **RISK**--

"--NOT WHEN THERE BE **OTHER** ALTERNATIVES **OPEN** TO ME!"

SHRA-KOOM!

MY CIRCLE OF OBLIVION IS **SUNDERED**--!?!

BUT HATH IT **DESTROYED** THE ACCURSED **NORN QUEEN** IN ITS **PASSING**?

NAY! KARNILLA HATH VANISHED OF HER OWN ACCORD--

-- AND, WORSE, SHE HATH TAKEN THE BODY OF THE COMATOSE BALDER WITH HER!

BY HELA, I MUST FOLLOW THEM-- LEST ALL MY WORK BE RUINED!

AS FOR THE CONFLICT BETWEEN THE DESTROYER AND THE MIGHTY THOR...

...WELL, UNFORTUNATELY, IT GOES PRETTY MUCH AS MIGHT BE EXPECTED--

--THE DETERMINED THUNDER GOD STRUGGLING STUBBORNLY ON AGAINST ALL-BUT-IMPOSSIBLE ODDS--

--UNTIL TWO NEW ELEMENTS ARE SUDDENLY ADDED TO THE BRUTAL EQUATION!

ODS BLOOD! DOTH LOKI SEND SOME NEW FOE AGAINST ME?

EH?! THE NORN QUEEN HATH RETURNED-- AND WITH HER, 'TIS BALDER THE BRAVE!

STAND THEE ASIDE, ODINSON! 'TIS FOR KARNILLA ALONE TO DO WHAT MUST NEXT BE DONE.

AYE, SORCERESS! I SHALL...

AARRGGHH!!

THROK!

CURSE IT ALL, THE WOUNDED THOR COULD NOT MOVE SWIFTLY ENOUGH! HE HATH FALLEN--

--AND THE MERCILESS DESTROYER MAY SOON SLAY HIM, LEST I INVOKE THE SPELL WHICH WILL RETURN BALDER'S SPIRIT TO ITS RIGHTFUL FORM--

--AND RENDER THE DESTROYER LIFELESS ONCE MORE!

BUT THAT THOU SHALT NEVER DO, TRAITRESS--

--SO LONG AS LOKI DOTH LIVE TO PREVENT THEE!!

UUNNHH!!

WITH A **MOAN** THAT CAN BE HEARD ACROSS THE CHAMBER, KARNILLA SLUMPS SENSELESS TO THE **FLOOR**--

--EVEN AS THE DESTROYER RAISES AN ARMORED FIST TO **FINISH** THE SEMI-CONSCIOUS **THOR!**

THEN, ALMOST **INEXPLICABLY**, THE BATTLE-BRED FIGURE **HESITATES**--

--TURNS ITS GRIM, GREY HEAD TO SURVEY THE SCENE OF A SUDDENLY-STARTLED **LOKI** STANDING MENACINGLY OVER THE FRAIL FIGURE OF THE FALLEN **NORN QUEEN**--

--AND, IF THE DESTROYER'S SOULLESS MASK CAN TRULY BE SAID TO SHOW **EXPRESSION**, THEN THE FACE IT NOW TURNS TO THE SNARLING **PRINCE OF EVIL** IS ONE OF PUREST **HATRED!**

SLOWLY AT FIRST, THE DESTROYER'S ARMORED BOOT BEGINS TO TURN **AWAY** FROM THE FALLEN **THOR**--

--THEN THE OTHER BOOT **FOLLOWS**--

--AND IN HIS BLEAK, BLACK **HEART**, LOKI KNOWS HIS MOMENT OF **IMPULSIVE ACTION** MAY WELL HAVE COST HIM **EVERYTHING!**

N-NAY... THE DESTROYER TURNS TOWARDS **ME!**

THAT **PART** OF THE BRUTE WHICH IS STILL THE CURSED **BALDER** SEEKS **VENGEANCE** FOR MY ASSAULT UPON THE NORN QUEEN!

VERILY, THIS MONSTER SHALL **SLAY** ME, LEST I ACT **SWIFTLY**--

"--AND USE MY POWER TO *RETURN* BALDER'S SPIRIT TO HIS *BODY!*"

THEN THOU HAST...ENGINEERED THINE OWN... *DOWNFALL*...TREACHEROUS ONE...

...FOR NOW... *NOTHING* STANDS... BETWEEN *THEE* AND... *ME!*

NOTHING, DEAR BROTHER?

TRULY, THY GRIEVOUS *WOUNDS* HAVE ADDLED THY *BRAIN!*

FOR THE *DESTROYER* BUT AWAITS A NEW *SPIRIT* TO GIVE HIM *LIFE*--

--AND *THIS* TIME, THAT SPIRIT SHALL BE *MINE!!*

NAY, EVIL ONE! IN THE NAME OF *SANITY*, I SAY THEE-- *NAY!!*

SUCH A MONSTROUS *TRAVESTY* MUST NEVER COME TO *PASS!*

EH?

IT APPEARS THOU HAST FOUND NEW *STRENGTH*, THUNDER GOD-- BUT IT WILL NOT *AID* THEE!

THE DESTROYER SHALL YET BE *MINE!*

NOT... WHILST... THOR... DOTH... *LIVE!*

*IN SAVAGE **SILENCE**, THE GOD OF THUNDER AND THE GOD OF MISCHIEF **TUMBLE** WILDLY ACROSS THE ROUGH-HEWN CHAMBER--*

*--UNTIL, AT LENGTH, TWO GRASPING **HANDS** REACH DESPERATELY OUT TO **TOUCH** THE IMMOBILE ARMORED FORM--*

*--AND WHEN ONE HAND FINALLY **BRUSHES** THE DESTROYER'S OWN, THE ROOM **ERUPTS** IN BLINDING **BRILLIANCE**--*

*--WHILE THE VERY **WALLS** BEGIN TO **TREMBLE**--*

--AND WHEN THE SORCEROUS **DAZZLE** HAS CEASED TO BE--

-- THE **DESTROYER** LIVES AGAIN!!

BY HELA! THE CURSED **THUNDER GOD** DID TOUCH THE DESTROYER **BEFORE** ME!

'TIS **HIS** NOBLE SPIRIT WHICH NOW **ANIMATES** THE ARMORED ONE--

--AND THE DESTROYER IS SWORN TO **SLAY** WHOMEVER HE FIRST SETS HIS HOODED **EYES** UPON!

I HAVE BUT **ONE** HOPE OF **SURVIVAL!** I MUST **CONCENTRATE**-- SUMMON ALL THE ARCANE POWER I POSSESS INTO A SINGLE EARTH-SHATTERING **BOLT OF FORCE**--

SHRRAKKTT!

-- AND **INCINERATE** THE DESTROYER ERE HE CAN LIVE UP TO HIS **NAME!**

DEMONS OF THE NORN! MY MIGHTIEST MYSTIC ASSAULT HAS NO EFFECT ON THIS ARMORED ABOMINATION!

AND THOUGH THE SPIRIT WITHIN THE DESTROYER IS SUPREMELY NOBLE--

--STILL DOTH THE WEARY THOR SEEM POWERLESS TO PREVENT THE ARMORED ONE FROM FULFILLING THE PURPOSE FOR WHICH ALMIGHTY ODIN CREATED HIM!

UUNNFF!!

BUT MAYHAP I CAN YET... NAY!

THE DESTROYER DOTH BEGIN TO LOWER HIS GLEAMING VISOR--

--AND THAT CAN MEAN BUT ONE THING!

HE IS PREPARING TO UNLEASH HIS GREATEST POWER--

--THE POWER OF TOTAL DISINTEGRATION!!

IS THIS THEN TO BE THE END OF ALL MY CAREFUL PLANNING?

AM I TO BE THE FINAL VICTIM OF THE ELEMENTAL FORCE WHICH I MYSELF SET LOOSE UPON THE LAND?

NAY! 'TIS TOO IRONIC-- TOO ABSURD--!

BUT IN ITS WAY, PRINCE OF EVIL-- 'TIS MOST FITTING!

WHO--?!?

BY ALL THE FATES-- IT CANNOT BE THEE!?!

AND IF THOU HADST HAD THY *WAY*, MY SON-- 'TWOULD *NOT* BE!

BUT *WHO* THEN, PRAY TELL, WOULD BE LEFT TO *SAVE* THEE FROM THE RAMPAGING *DESTROYER?*

IN TRUTH, WHO DOTH POSSESS THE *POWER* SAVE THY RIGHTFUL *LORD AND LIEGE?*

WHO DOTH POSSESS THE MATCHLESS *STRENGTH*-- SAVE ALMIGHTY *ODIN?*

LET ALL NOW PRESENT *BEND THEIR KNEE* BEFORE HIM WHO BE *MONARCH OVER ALL!*

DOWN UPON THY *KNEE*, I SAY THEE, NOBLE *THOR!*

NAY, MILORD-- THE THUNDER GOD WILL NOT *HEED* THEE!

THE *KILLING FURY* IS UPON HIM-- AND ONLY OUR *DEATHS* WILL SLAKE HIS *THIRST!*

*SLOWLY, THE ARMORED BE-HEMOTH **STRIDES** TOWARD THE RULER OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--*

*--MURDEROUS POWER **SEETHING** FROM BENEATH HIS LOWERED **VISOR**--*

*--UNTIL, MERE **INCHES** AWAY FROM THE DARK-EYED **ODIN**, THE DESTROYER **PAUSES**--*

*--THEN LOWERS HIS OUT-STRETCHED **FIST**--*

*--**BOWS** HIS GLEAMING HEAD--*

--AND GENTLY BENDS HIS KNEE!!

FATHER... I... AM... THY... SERVANT!

THEN, WITH A GESTURE BOTH **FORCEFUL** AND YET SOMEHOW **TENDER**--

--THE ALMIGHTY ODIN **RELEASES** THE THUNDER GOD'S SPIRIT FROM ITS DREADFUL ARMORED **PRISON**--

--AND TAKES HIS WORN AND BLOODIED **SON** INTO HIS **ARMS!**

'TIS **OVER**, FLESH OF MY FLESH--

--AND, AS EVER, THOU HAST MADE THY FATHER **PROUD!**

FATHER, THOU ART TRULY *THYSELF* ONCE MORE?

AYE, MY SON.

THEN MY GOOD COMRADES DID NOT *FAIL* ME!

NAY, THUNDER GOD-- THEY ARE ALL TRULY *WARRIORS BORN!*

PFAH! 'TWAS REALLY *NOTHING*, MILORD!

MODESTY, OF COURSE, FORBIDS MY GOING INTO *DETAIL* BUT...

BUT EVEN *I* MUST ADMIT THAT *THIS* TIME, VAST ONE, THOU DIDST CERTAINLY *PULL THY WEIGHT!*

"AYE, WHEN WE SUNDERED THE ENTRANCEWAY TO THE TROLL-FORGED *CAVERN* WHERE LOKI'S MINIONS HAD *HIDDEN* THE ALL-FATHER, SORCEROUS FUMES *OVERCAME* US FOR A TIME..."

"...BUT THE *FRESH AIR* SEEPING IN THROUGH THE SHATTERED PORTAL SWIFTLY *REVIVED* US..."

"...AND WE THEN CARRIED OUR LORD LIEGE BACK TO THE *PALACE IMPERIAL*-- WHERE, AT LAST, HE *AWOKE* FROM THE FABLED *ODIN-SLEEP*...

"...ONCE MORE THE *LIVING EMBODIMENT* OF THE GOLDEN REALM'S *GLORY* AND ITS *GRANDEUR!*"

AYE, MY FRIENDS-- ALL HAIL *NOBLE ODIN!*

SO LONG AS *HE* DOTH ENDURE, SO TOO SHALL IMMORTAL *ASGARD!*

FOR HIS IS THE *WORD* AND THE *WILL* AND *WAY* AND THE *WONDER!*

AND THUS SHALL IT EVER *BE!!*

NEXT ISSUE:

A TIME FOR LONG-AWAITED *ENDINGS* AND BRIGHT NEW *BEGINNINGS!* VERILY, THOU SHALT *BE HERE* FOR..

"TO MIDGARD--AND MAYHEM!"

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Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

THUNDER IN THE 31ST CENTURY!

THE RELATIVE CALM OF A WARM SUMMER'S MORN IS SUDDENLY **SHAKEN** BY THE WHISTLING **HOWL** OF A MIGHTY, ONRUSHING **WIND**--

--AND THE USUALLY JADED CITIZENS OF MIDTOWN **MANHATTAN** TURN THEIR COLLECTIVE GAZE **SKYWARD**, STARING IN UNASHAMED **AWE** AT THE MAJESTIC GOLDEN-HAIRED **FIGURE** HURTLING BY HIGH OVERHEAD!

'TIS MOST PASSING **STRANGE!** THOUGH THE SPIRIT OF THOR AS EVER DOTH **SOAR** AT THE WELCOME SIGHT OF THIS **CITY**--

--STILL DOTH MINE HEART WEIGH **HEAVY**, AS IF SOME UNSEEN **CALAMITY** DOTH BUT AWAIT ITS CHANCE TO **STRIKE!**

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GLYNIS WEIN: COLORIST | JOE ROSEN: LETTERER

BY ODIN! METHINKS MY FEARS HATH TOO SOON BORNE FRUIT! THE AUTHORITIES DOTH LAY SIEGE TO YONDER BUILDING!

...AND I CAN FAIRLY TASTE THE FEAR IN THE AIR!

ROXXON NUCLEONICS

CAREFUL, MEN-- WE DON'T WANT TO PROVOKE THEM--!

CLEARLY, MINE AID BE NEEDED HERE!

JOHNSON, I TOLD YOU NOT TO... HUH?

CAPTAIN-- LOOK!

WELL, IT'S ABOUT TIME!

HOW MAY THOR ASSIST THEE, OFFICER?

GOLDILOCKS, YOU GOTTA BE KIDDING! WE'VE GOT A HALF-DOZEN TERRORISTS BOTTLED UP IN THERE WITH AN ACTIVE NUCLEAR REACTOR!

WE DON'T GET 'EM OUT FAST-- AND WE CAN KISS THIS CITY GOOD-BYE!

THEN I PRAY THEE, GOOD SIR-- CALL THY MEN ASIDE!

THE GOD OF THUNDER SHALL ATTEND TO THIS--

--AS ONLY HE WHO WIELDS THE MYSTIC MALLET MJOLNIR CAN!

THE CAPTAIN'S BRASHNESS BUT SERVES TO HIDE HIS CONCERN-- FOR HIMSELF AND FOR HIS CITY!

I MUST STRIKE SWIFTLY IF I AM TO ALLAY HIS FEARS!

AYE, A POLICE AIRCRAFT WOULD CERTAINLY BE NOTICED BY THOSE BARRICADED WITHIN!

ONLY THE SON OF ODIN COULD APPROACH SO SILENTLY... SO SWIFTLY...

...AND THUS STRIKE WITH TOTAL SURPRISE!!

KRA-KOOM!

HOLY--!?!

IT'S WHAT'S-HIS-NAME--!!

THAT THUNDER GUY!!

THAT DOES IT, MAN! WE WARNED THOSE FOOLS ABOUT RUSHING US!

THE BLOOD WILL BE ON THEIR HANDS NOW!

WE DIE-- FOR THE CAUSE!!

THOR DOTH SAY THEE NAY, FOOLISH ONE! SO LONG AS MIGHTY MJOLNIR BE MINE TO COMMAND--

--THERE SHALL BE NO USELESS DEATH HERE THIS DAY!

"NOT EVEN THINE OWN!"

THRANG!

NO.

NOW LAY DOWN THINE ARMS, KNAVES! THOU SHALT THREATEN THIS FAIR CITY NO LONGER!

NO! WE'VE COME TOO FAR-- RISKED TOO MUCH! THE COPS'LL NEVER KNOW THAT REACTOR IS HARMLESS NOW--

--IF YOU'RE NOT ALIVE TO TELL THEM!!

BLAM!

WASTE 'IM, GUYS!!

BLAM!

POW!

CHURLS! HOWEVER NOBLE MIGHT BE THY CAUSE, THOU DOST DEMEAN IT BY THY COWARDLY ACTIONS!

SPOW!

SPWEE

SPOW!

VERILY, I SHALL *PERMIT* THY MINDLESS VIOLENCE *NO LONGER!!*

THROOM!

AND THE *SHOCKWAVE* GENERATED BY THE MIGHTY URU HAMMER COULD BE *RIVALED* ONLY BY THE POUNDING *FISTS* OF A CERTAIN *GREEN GOLIATH!*

I-IT'S *HOPELESS!* WE JUST CAN'T *FIGHT* HIM-- HE'S TOO *POWERFUL!*

AYE-- AND GIVE *THANKS*, THOU CRAVEN VARLETS, THAT THE SON OF ODIN DOTH *RESPECT* LIFE MORE THAN *THEE*...

...OR THOU WOULDST SIT AT THE LEFT HAND OF THE DEATH-GODDESS *HELA* ERE THIS BATTLE BE *DONE!*

Y-YOU JUST DON'T *UNDERSTAND*... HOW *COULD* YOU?

HOW COULD A *GOD* EVER *BEGIN* TO KNOW THE *HARDSHIP*-- THE *INJUSTICE* WE FACE EVERY DAY?

AND TO *AVENGE* THE INJUSTICES DONE THEE, THOU WOULDST SNUFF OUT THE *LIVES OF 10 MILLION PEOPLE?*

IF THY *CAUSE* COMES BEFORE EVEN *LIFE ITSELF*, THEN WHERE, PRITHEE, IS *ITS* JUSTICE?

NO-- *WAIT!* LOOK-- OVER *THERE!*

"SOMETHIN'S *HAPPENIN'* TO THE *REACTOR!* IT'S STARTIN' TO *GLOW* LIKE IT WAS ON *FIRE!*"

WHAT--?!? BY ASGARD, IF THIS BE *THY* DOING, KNAVE...

N-NO! YA GOTTA *BELIEVE* ME! IT'S THE *REACTOR* ITSELF--!

A STRAY **SHOT** MUST'VE **HIT** IT! IT'S **OVERLOADING!**

IT'S GONNA **BLOW!!**

THEN PRAY THERE DOTH BE SOME WAY TO **STOP** IT, KNAVE--

--OR SURELY **HELA** SHALL CLAIM US **ALL!!**

BY THE NORN! WHAT **WIZARDRY** IS THIS?

THE **GLOWING** COMES NOT FROM **WITHIN** THE REACTOR, BUT FROM **WITHOUT!**

STILL MUST I ATTEMPT TO...

*THE SENTENCE GOES **UNFINISHED**. FOR SUDDENLY, THE AIR FAIRLY **CRACKLES** WITH ELDRITCH ENERGIES UNLEASHED -- THE ACRID STENCH OF **OZONE** FILLS THE CHAMBER, AND THEN...*

SWEET HEAVEN-- **NO!!**

I DIDN'T **KNOW** IT WOULD BE LIKE **THIS**-- NOT LIKE **THIS!!**

THAKOOOM!

*AND WHEN THE **POLICE** BURST IN, MOMENTS LATER...*

WELL, WHADDAYA **KNOW**? LOOKS LIKE THAT NUCLEAR FIRECRACKER DIDN'T GO BOOM **AFTER ALL**-- NOW, **DID** IT?

THERE'S THE **TERRORISTS**, ALL LAID OUT NICE AND **NEAT!**

BUT WHERE'S THAT BLASTED LONG-HAIRED **AVENGER** GONE TO?

C-CAPTAIN?

"I--AH--THINK I KNOW THE **ANSWER** TO THAT, SIR...

"...AND I **DON'T** THINK YOU'RE GOING TO **LIKE** IT!"

AND EVEN AS THE STUPIFIED POLICE CAPTAIN STARES AT THE SMOLDERING **HOLE** IN THE LABORATORY FLOOR IN SLACK-JAWED **WONDER**, THE MIGHTY THOR BLINKS BACK INTO **REALITY**...

...ALBEIT, A DRASTICALLY **DIFFERENT** REALITY BY FAR!

X MINUS 301

HEIMDALL'S EYES! WH-WHERE **AM** I?

EH? WHAT'S **THIS?**

MY **TIME PROBE** WASN'T SUPPOSED TO PICK UP **PASSENGERS!**

AY? I SEE THEE IN THE **SHADOWS!** WHAT MANNER OF BEING **ART** THOU?

I MIGHT WELL ASK THE SAME OF **YOU**-- BUT MY **DATA-BANKS** WILL SUPPLY THE ANSWER MUCH **FASTER!**

*AND INSTANTS **LATER**...*

WHAT **NONSENSE** IS THIS? THERE MUST BE A **CIRCUIT MALFUNCTION** SOMEWHERE!

SUBJECT IDENTIFICATION... NAME: THOR... DESIGNATION: GOD OF THUNDER... AGE: DOES NOT COMPUTE... **DANGER!**... **DANGER!**...

KLIK

WELL, **WHOEVER** YOU ARE, YOU CANNOT BE ALLOWED TO **INTERFERE** WITH MY WELL-LAID **PLANS!**

WHAT--? THOU DOST ATTACK WITHOUT *CAUSE*-- WITHOUT *PROVOCATION*?

SPAKT!

WHOEVER THOU ART, JACKAL-- THOU HAST SHOWN THY *TRUE* COLORS...

...BUT NOT *ALL* THY FEARSOME *FIRE-BOLTS* CAN MATCH THE *FURY* OF MINE OWN ENCHANTED *HAMMER!*

SHRAKT!

I WANT *ANSWERS*, KNAVE, AND I SHALL *HAVE* THEM OR...

OR *NOTHING!*

AS *IMPOSSIBLE* AS IT *SEEMS*, IT APPEARS MY DATA-BANKS HAVE IDENTIFIED YOU *CORRECTLY!*

BUT *YOUR* LEGENDARY POWER MATTERS *LITTLE*--AGAINST POWER SUCH AS *THIS!*

KLIK!

BY ASGARD'S GLEAMING SPIRES! ONCE AGAIN, I... *FADE!*

BUT *WHITHER* AM I TO BE TRANSPORTED *THIS* TIME?

THE ANSWER TO THAT IS AT ONCE *OBVIOUS*... AND *UNBELIEVABLE!*

OD'S BLOOD! I AM *LOST*... IN THE VOID OF *DEEP SPACE!*

*HIS WARRIOR'S BLOOD **POUNDING** BEHIND HIS TIGHTLY-CLENCHED **EYES**, THE ASGARDIAN AVENGER STRUGGLES TO MAINTAIN HIS **CONSCIOUSNESS**--*

*--IN HOPES OF FINDING SOME **RESPITE**, SOME **REFUGE!***

*BUT IT IS A MOST **FUTILE** HOPE INDEED.*

*WITHIN MOMENTS, HE FEELS THE FRIGID DARKNESS **RUSHING IN** ON HIM...*

*...AND EVERYTHING SWIFTLY FADES TO **BLACK!***

BILLIONS OF KILOMETERS AWAY, FIVE INTREPID ADVENTURERS SEND THEIR NEW STARSHIP-- THE **FREEDOM'S LADY**--HURTLING THRU THE OUTERMOST REACHES OF THE **MILKY WAY.**

THEY ARE THE LAST OF THEIR **KIND,** THESE FIVE: **CHARLIE-27,** THE JOVIAN MILITIAMAN... **MARTINEX,** THE CRYSTAL MAN OF PLUTO... **NIKKI,** THE FLAME-TRESSED MERCURIAN... **YONDU,** LAST OF THE ALPHA CENTAURI WEAPONS-MASTERS... AND **MAJOR VANCE ASTRO,** EARTH'S THOUSAND-YEAR-OLD SPACEMAN. TOGETHER THEY **PATROL** THIS SWIRLING PINWHEEL OF STARS--SELF-APPOINTED **PROTECTORS** OF LIFE AND LIBERTY!

CHAPTER TWO AND THEY SHALL BE GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY™

JUST **LOOK** AT THAT KID! EVERY TIME I **SEE** HER, I FEEL LIKE I'M BACK...

AW, EYES **RIGHT,** ASTRO! YOU'RE JUST A FEW CENTURIES TOO **OLD** TO BE THINKING ABOUT **THAT** LITTLE LADY!

YOU'RE DOING **VERY WELL,** NIKKI! NOW BRING THE ENGINES UP TO **FULL.**

ATTA **GIRL,** SQUIRT! MARTY AND I'LL MAKE A HOTSHOT **PILOT** OUTTA YOU **YET!**

LISTEN, I'LL SETTLE FOR BEING A **WARM**SHOT! FLYING A FOUR-MAN SPACE YACHT IS **ONE** THING--

--BUT RIDING HERD ON **THIS** BATTLEWAGON IS SOMETHING **ELSE!**

THIS IS **STARHAWK**, THE ENIGMATIC ARCTURIAN **MUTANT**-- HEIR TO ALL THE POWER AND KNOWLEDGE OF AN ANCIENT **STAR-SPANNING CIVILIZATION.**

AND OUTSIDE THE SHIP, A **SIXTH** GUARDIAN-- PERHAPS **PREFERRING** THE **SOLITUDE** OF SPACE -- **PACES** THEIR FLIGHT.

HE IS, SIMPLY, THE "**ONE WHO KNOWS!**"

BUT EVEN THE ALL-KNOWING STARHAWK IS **UNPREPARED** FOR THE SIZZLING **POWER BEAM** THAT SUDDENLY **STRIKES OUT** AT THE SHIP--

--CREATING **HAVOC** WITHIN HER!

NIKKI! FEED **MORE POWER** TO THE STARBOARD STABILIZERS -- **QUICKLY!!**

I-I'M **TRYING**-- BUT THERE'S NO **RESPONSE!**

NO WONDER-- **LOOK!**

"OUR INBOARD RELAY BANK HAS **BROKEN LOOSE!**"

BREEEEEE

IF THAT THING SHOULD TOPPLE **OVER**, WE COULD BE STUCK HERE FOR **DAYS!**

GOTTA STOP IT NOW!!

FOR VANCE ASTRO, THOUGHT QUITE **LITERALLY** BECOMES ACTION, AS A BOLT OF **PURE PSYCHO-KINETIC FORCE** LANCES OUT FROM HIS FOREHEAD --

--TO **HALT** THE FALLING MECHANISM IN ITS **TRACKS!**

GOOD **MOVE**, VANCE!

I CAN TAKE IT FROM HERE!

NO, CHARLIE-- **WAIT!** LOOK OUT FOR THE--

"--HIGH VOLTAGE CABLES!"

ZZZZZZTT

OBOY.

ZZZZZZTT

ZZZZZZTT

CHARLIE! DON'T MOVE!

AND SO SAYING, YONDU SENDS A SOUND-SENSITIVE SHAFT OF ***LIVING YAKA METAL*** FLYING ACROSS THE CABIN.

THE FINNED GUARDIAN WHISTLES A ***SINGLE*** PIERCING NOTE, AND THE ARROW BEGINS TO ***RESPOND***--

--***SPEARING*** THE DEADLY ELECTRO-CABLES, ***WRAPPING*** THEM UP--

--AND TYING THEM ***OFF***, SAFELY ***OUT*** OF THE JOVIAN'S WAY!

THANKS FOR THE ***ASSIST***, YON! BEING ***ELECTROCUTED*** WOULD'VE ***RUINED*** MY WHOLE DAY!

AND SHORTLY...

THAT'S ***IT***, CHARLIE! A LITTLE TO THE ***LEFT*** NOW-- ***THERE!***

A SPOT OF ***WELDING***, AND SHE'LL BE GOOD AS ***NEW***.

BOY, WE'RE BECOMING A REGULAR LITTLE ***TEAM***, AREN'T WE?

HEY, SPEAKING OF ***TEAMS***, WHERE'S ***STARHAWK*** BEEN DURING ALL OF THIS?

DON'T TELL ME BLUE BOY'S ***ABANDONED*** US AGAIN?*

*AS HE DID--MORE OR LESS--IN MARVEL PRESENTS *10.--LEN.

AS **USUAL**, MAJOR ASTRO IS **WRONG** ABOUT STARHAWK!

AS A MATTER OF **FACT**, THE COSMIC GUARDIAN HAS SPENT THE PAST FEW MINUTES **SUBSTITUTING** FOR THE SHIP'S STARBOARD STABILIZERS.

THE CRISIS NOW **OVER**, THE ONE-WHO-KNOWS STEPS UPON A CERTAIN SECTION OF THE OUTER HULL --

--ACTIVATING THE STARCRAFT'S **TELEPORTATION UNITS.**

GUARDIANS! WE ARE **NEEDED!**

WELL! IT'S VERY **NICE** OF YOU TO **HONOR** US WITH YOUR **PRESENCE!**

JUST WHAT THE DEVIL **HAPPENED** OUT THERE?

SIMPLY **PUT**, MAJOR, WE INTERSECTED A POWER BEAM OF INCREDIBLE INTENSITY! HAD WE BEEN ANYWHERE NEAR ITS **FOCAL POINT**, WE WOULD HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY **DISINTEGRATED!**

SOMEONE, MY FRIENDS, IS PLAYING WITH **DEADLY FORCES.**

THEN I SUPPOSE IT'S UP TO **US** TO PLAY **SPACE COPS** AGAIN!

MARTY--?

I **READ** YOU, VANCE! WE'LL **FOLLOW** THAT BEAM RIGHT TO ITS **SOURCE!**

AND SO, WITH SHIP'S COMPUTERS **LOCKED** ONTO THE BEAM, THE MIGHTY STARSHIP TURNS ABOUT AND HEADS FOR THE AWESOME ENERGY TRAIL'S **POINT OF ORIGIN.**

BUT **AT** THAT POINT, THEIR SEARCH DOES NOT GO **UNNOTICED...**

SSSIR! SSSOMEONE **COMESSS!**

BLAST! THESE PETTY ANNOYANCES MUST **CEASE!**

I'VE ACCOMPLISHED **TOO MUCH** HERE! I WON'T **TOLERATE** ANY SNOOPERS INTERFERING WITH MY **POWER-SIPHON BEAM!**

KLIK!

AND WITH THE MEREST FLICK OF A **SWITCH,** DEEP SPACE SUDDENLY BECOMES **CROWDED** WITH ALL MANNER OF **ROCKY DEBRIS--**

--ALL OF IT **RUSHING** TOWARDS FREEDOM'S LADY AT **NEAR-LIGHT SPEED!**

MARTY! WHAT--?

METEOR STORM! BUT I'VE NEVER SEEN ONE **LIKE** IT!

HANG ON! PREPARE FOR **EVASIVE ACTION!**

HIS HANDS **FLYING** ACROSS THE CONTROLS, THE PLUVIAN SCIENCE OFFICER THROWS THE FREEDOM'S LADY INTO A **DESPERATE** PORT TURN--

--ONE NO STARSHIP WAS EVER **MEANT** TO PERFORM!

WOW! I KNEW WE WERE ON A SHAKEDOWN CRUISE, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!

TO BE SURE! WE ESCAPED WITHOUT DAMAGE BY CHANCE MORE THAN ANYTHING ELSE.

UNFORTUNATELY, WE ARE NOW SEVERAL MILLION KILOMETERS OFF COURSE.

ODD! I CAN'T GET OVER THE SUDDENNESS OF THAT METEOR STORM!

THAT STORM WAS NO ACCIDENT, MARTINEX. IT WAS DIRECTED AT US!

WHAT? ARE YOU SURE?

I AM ALWAYS SURE-- AND SHIP'S SENSORS CONFIRM IT, YONDU.

OBVIOUSLY, SOMEONE DOES NOT WANT US TO INVESTIGATE THAT BEAM.

"I SUGGEST WE APPROACH THE SOURCE-POINT VIA A MORE ROUND-ABOUT ROUTE. I SHALL LEAD THE WAY."

AND SOON, THE MYSTERIOUS ARCTURIAN IS HURTLING THRU THE VOID, AS IF TO CLEAR A PATH FOR THE GIANT STARSHIP, HIS SOLAR SAILS FILLING WITH THE COLD STELLAR WINDS.

UNTIL...

WHAT? AN ICE-ENCRUSTED HUMANOID? WHAT MANNER OF GRISLY WARNING IS THIS?

INCREDIBLE! THIS BEING STILL LIVES!

BUT I SENSE THAT HE WILL YET PERISH IF HE DOES NOT REACH A FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT-- AND SWIFTLY!!

IMPRESSED BY THE URGENT **CONDITION** OF HIS FIND, STARHAWK RACES **BACK** TO THE HAVEN OF THE WAITING STARSHIP...

...WHERE, SOON...

BOY, YOU SURE CAN **PICK** 'EM, 'HAWK!

THIS IS NO TIME TO **JOKE**, NIKKI! BY ALL **RIGHTS**, THIS MAN SHOULD BE **DEAD!**

AMAZING! I'D ALMOST SWEAR--!

I **MYSELF** AM PUZZLED, MARTINEX. THE VERY **MOISTURE** OF HIS BODY SEEMS TO HAVE FROZEN ABOUT HIM LIKE A **SHEATH.**

CONSIDER THIS **TABLEAU.** OVER A **THOUSAND** YEARS PAST, A GROUP THEN CALLED THE **AVENGERS** WITNESSED THE RESURRECTION OF **CAPTAIN AMERICA**-- A HERO OUT OF HIS **TIME.**

NOW, **HISTORY REPEATS ITSELF!**

WAIT-A-MINUTE! I- I **RECOGNIZE** THIS GUY FROM PICTURES I SAW AS A **BOY!** HE'S ONE OF THE GREATEST **HEROES** OF MY **CENTURY!**

"THIS IS **THOR**-- THE **GOD OF THUNDER!**"

AYE... 'TIS... TRUE.

CHAPTER THREE THE MASTER PLAN OF KORVAC!

WHILE THE GUARDIANS PLAY WITNESS TO THE **REAWAKENING OF THOR**, SIX DECIDEDLY MORE **MALEVOLENT** BEINGS GATHER IN A COMPUTER-LADEN CHAMBER NEAR THE **SOURCE** OF THE MYSTERIOUS **POWER BEAM**...

MISTER TEJU-- YOUR *REPORT*?

YOUR METEOR SSSTORM *WORKED*, GREAT *KORVAC!* THE FOREIGN SSSTARSHIP HASSS *DISSSAPPEARED* FROM OUR *SSSCREENS!*

YOU *FOOL!* RETURN TO YOUR VIEWSCREENS AT ONCE AND *DOUBLE CHECK!*

I WANT A *100% VERIFICATION* OF THAT SHIP'S *DESTRUCTION!*

YEAH, YOU *HEARD* THE BOSS, SCALY! CHECK IT OUT-- AND MAKE IT *SNAPPY!*

I SSSHALL DO MY *JOB*, GROTT--

--BUT NO LITTLE *DWARF* ISS GOING TO *ORDER ME AROUND!*

UHHH!

WHY, YOU LONG-TAILED *SLIME-WORM*--!

JUST BECAUSE I'M CALLED THE *MAN*SLAYER, DON'T THINK I CAN'T HANDLE A *REPTOID* LIKE *YOU!*

HSSS!

HA-HA-HA! *THAT'S* IT, LITTLE ONE! SHOW THE LIZARD HIS *PLACE!*

BRAHL, THE ONLY "PLACE" WE *LIZARDS* HAVE--

--IS STANDING OVER THE *BODIES* OF SUCH AS Y--

EH?

HA-HA-HA! GO RIGHT *AHEAD*, TORK!

WEAR YOURSELF OUT *TRYING* TO STRIKE AN *INTANGIBLE!*

NOW WHAT? DUMOG, YOU STUPID *BLOB! LET ME GO!*

NOT UNTIL YOU CALM DOWN, TORK!

STOP IT! ALL OF YOU!

BLAM!

I SHALL BROOK **NO DISSENSION** IN THE RANKS! YOU WILL ALL **CALM** YOURSELVES--

--OR YOU SHALL FACE THE FULL, UNFETTERED FURY OF **KORVAC!**

*SILENCE FALLS LIKE A **CURTAIN** OVER THE CHAMBER. FOR ONE CHILLING MOMENT, NONE OF THE FIVE UNDERLINGS **DARE** TO SPEAK, BUT THEN...*

MEANING NO **DISRESPECT**, SIR -- BUT WE **ARE** STILL IN THE **DARK** AS TO THE EXACT **NATURE** OF YOUR PROJECT.

IF YOU COULD JUST **EXPLAIN**...

VERY WELL, **DUMOG** -- YOU SHALL **HAVE** YOUR EXPLANATION!

MY RISE TO **POWER** BEGAN SOME EIGHT YEARS AGO. I WAS JUST A **COMPUTER-TECHNO** THEN.

"MY SUPERIORS HAD **CONSTANTLY** REFUSED TO RECOGNIZE THE SCOPE OF MY **ABILITIES**. THUS, WHEN THE **BADOON** INVADED THE SOLAR SYSTEM, I GLADLY BECAME A **COLLABORATOR**.

"SOON I WAS **IN CHARGE** OF ANALYTICAL SYSTEMS FOR **ENTIRE PLANETS!**

"UNFORTUNATELY, THE BADOON WERE PARTICULARLY **HARSH** TASKMASTERS. THE DAY CAME WHEN I **COLLAPSED** AT MY CONSOLE FROM **SHEER EXHAUSTION**.

"AS **PUNISHMENT**, THEY **ALTERED** MY CENTRAL NERVOUS SYSTEM AND **GRAFTED** MY BODY ONTO A **SPECIAL SYSTEMS MODULE**.

"IN SHORT, I BECAME A **LIVING COMPUTER!**

"BUT THE BADOON DID THEIR JOB **TOO** WELL. WITH MY HYPER-FAST **CALCULATING** ABILITIES, I WAS ABLE TO DEVELOP THE MEANS TO **OVERCOME** MY MASTERS.

"DOUBTLESS, I COULD HAVE ***CONQUERED*** THE ENTIRE ***BADOON BROTHERHOOD***, HAD I NOT BEEN DRAWN THRU TIME BY THE ***COSMIC GAMESMAN*** KNOWN AS THE ***GRANDMASTER***, TO BATTLE THE 20th CENTURY SORCERER, ***DR. STRANGE!****

*GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS #3 -- LEN.

"THE MAGICIAN PROBABLY THOUGHT HIS USE OF COMMON ***FISTICUFFS*** TOOK ME BY ***SURPRISE***-- BUT ACTUALLY, I HAD ***ANTICIPATED*** HIS MOVE AND ***ALLOWED*** HIM TO BEAT ME!

"WHILE I SUPPOSEDLY LAID ***BROKEN***, MY SENSORS WERE ANALYSING AND ***SYNTHESIZING*** A PORTION OF THE ***GRANDMASTER'S ENERGIES!***

"THUS, IN MY SO-CALLED ***DEFEAT***, I GAINED MUCH ***MORE*** THAN I COULD ***EVER*** HAVE THRU ***VICTORY.***

"UPON MY ***RETURN*** TO THE 31ST CENTURY, I UTILIZED MY NEWFOUND ABILITIES TO ***TELEPORT*** MYSELF TO THIS ONCE-DESOLATE ***PLANETOID***--

"--WHERE, WITH ALL THE NEW ***KNOWLEDGE*** AT MY DISPOSAL, I WAS ABLE TO TRANSFORM ***BARREN ROCK*** INTO A TECHNOLOGICAL ***WONDERLAND*** UNLIKE ANY IN KNOWN SPACE.

"I ***IMMEDIATELY*** STARTED SENDING ***PROBES*** OUT THRU TIME AND SPACE, TO RECOVER ***LONG-LOST*** DEVICES AND ARTIFACTS--

"--AS WELL AS TO RECRUIT ***YOU***, MY LIEUTENANTS-- FOR WHAT IS AN ***EMPIRE*** WITHOUT A LOYAL ***HOME GUARD?***"

AN... EMPIRE?

INDEED! FOR SOON, THIS ENTIRE GALAXY SHALL BE MINE TO RULE!!

AND ON THAT DAY, I SHALL HAVE MY REVENGE UPON ALL WHO DARED DENY ME POWER!

HERE, I HAVE BUILT A TRUE PARADISE! HERE, THE ELITE OF A THOUSAND, THOUSAND WORLDS SHALL FLOCK--

--AND ALL SHALL PAY HOMAGE TO THE GLORY OF KORVAC!

"EVEN NOW, THE BEAM OF MY POWER-SIPHON STREAKS THRU THE HEAVENS, BOUND FOR SOL, THE INSIGNIFICANT LITTLE STAR-SUN OF MY WRETCHED HOMEWORLD EARTH!

"AND WHEN IT STRIKES, THE SUN WILL GO NOVA!

"THEN THE SIPHON WILL LEAP INTO OPERATION, DRAWING THE POWER OF THE EXPLODING STAR BACK ALONG THE BEAM TO FULLY ENERGIZE MY DEVICES."

THE PITIFUL LITTLE SOLAR SYSTEM THAT ONCE IGNORED ME WILL PROVIDE ME WITH POWER FOR UNTOLD MILLENIA!

X MINUS 200

AND THIS POWER BECOMES MINE IN JUST TWO HOURS! THAT IS WHY THERE MUST BE NO INTERFERENCE!

AND THAT IS WHY I WANT--!

SSSIRE! THE SSSHIP--

"--IT RETURNSSS!"

SO *THIS* IS YOUR BASIC *20th CENTURY HERO*, EH?

THERE'S NOTHING BASIC ABOUT *THOR*, NIKKI--

HE'S AN ACTUAL *ASGARDIAN IMMORTAL!*

REALLY, MAJOR! YOU DON'T ACTUALLY *BELIEVE* THIS BEING IS A *LIVING GOD*?!

WELL, MARTY, I...

MY LORD, I BEG YOU TO *FORGIVE* MY FRIEND. HE CANNOT SEE THE SPIRIT OF *ANTHOS* WITHIN YOU AS *I* CAN.

PLEASE--ACCEPT MY BOW IN *OFFERING.*

WHOA! YONDU WOULD *NEVER* GIVE UP HIS BOW *UNLESS...*

ARISE, GOOD SIR! THOR DOTH SEEK NEITHER ADORATION *NOR* OFFERING--THOUGH IN TRUTH, THY *GIFT* DOES ME GREAT *HONOR.*

FOR BY THY *VISAGE*, THOU WOULDST BE ONE OF THE FABLED *GUARDIANS OF THE GALAXY*--

--WHO ONCE DID FIGHT AT THE SIDE OF *CAPTAIN AMERICA* AND THE BESTIAL *THING!**

BUT BY *THAT* RECKONING, I AM IN THE *FAR FUTURE!*

DON'T LET IT *WORRY* YA, MUSCLES! THE 31ST CENTURY CAN BE FUN--*IF* YOU HAVE THE *PROPER COMPANY!*

*MARVEL TWO-IN-ONE #5--LEN.

HEY, SHOW A LITTLE *CLASS*, SQUIRT! IT'S NOT *POLITE* TO VAMP A *THUNDER GOD!*

CHARLIE, YOU--*YOU LUMMOX! PUT ME DOWN!*

DON'T MIND *THEM*, THOR--THEY'RE *ALWAYS* LIKE THAT!

I'M *MAJOR VANCE ASTRO*--WELCOME ABOARD THE *FREEDOM'S LADY!*

THE HONOR BE *MINE*, MAJOR!

CAPTAIN AMERICA DID SPEAK *MOST HIGHLY* OF THE GUARDIANS IN HIS *AVENGERS REPORT.*

WELL, THEN IT'S *OUR* TURN TO BE *HONORED!*

OF COURSE, WE'VE HAD A COUPLE OF *ADDITIONS* SINCE WE MET CAP. THE *SOMBER* TYPE OVER THERE IN THE BLUE IS *STARHAWK*, AND THE LITTLE *LADY* IS *NIKKI!*

MY SOLEMNITY IS NOT WITHOUT *REASON*, MAJOR. WE *ALL* FACE A MOST DEADLY *FOE!*

I'LL *GET* YOU FOR THAT, CHUNKY!

AW, *STOW* IT!

AND ONCE STARHAWK HAS INFORMED THOR OF THEIR ENCOUNTER WITH THE ***MYSTERIOUS BEAM...***

--THUS IT IS *EVIDENT* TO ME THAT WHOEVER *BROUGHT* YOU TO THIS ERA IS *ALSO* BEHIND THE *MACHINATIONS* OF THE *BEAM.*

BUT IF OUR "FOE" IS THROWING AROUND *THAT* KIND OF ENERGY, WHAT IS HE HOPING TO *ACCOMPLISH*?

WHAT? IS IT NOT *ENOW* THAT HE HATH *PROVEN* HIS VILLAINY THRICE OVER?

BY MY TROTH, HE *MUST BE STOPPED!*

FIRED BY THE RESOLVE OF THE THUNDER GOD, THE ***GUARDIANS*** *SOON HAVE THEIR STARSHIP* ***HURTLING*** *THRU THE VOID, HEADED FOR THE POWER BEAM'S* ***SOURCE*** *ONCE MORE.*

WHILE, IN THE ***LAIR*** *OF KORVAC...*

EVEN *NOW* THE VESSEL DRAWSSS *NEAR!* WHAT SSSHOULD I *DO*?

FOOL! DO YOU HAVE TO BE TOLD *EVERYTHING?*

ACTIVATE THE DEFENSE DRONES!

AT KORVAC'S COMMAND, THREE DECEPTIVELY SMALL SHIPS ***BURST FREE*** *OF THE PLANET'S ATMOSPHERE AND* ***RUSH*** *TO MEET THE APPROACHING CRAFT...*

BEFORE ANY OF THE GUARDIANS CAN **REACT**, THEIR SHIP IS **BESET** BY THE THREE MINIATURES--EACH ONE **BLASTING** AWAY WITH THE FIREPOWER OF A **FULL-SCALE STARSHIP!**

WITHIN MOMENTS, THE LADY'S **FORCE-SCREENS** BEGIN TO **BUCKLE.**

AW, **NO! NOT AGAIN!**

WE JUST **LOST** ONE SHIP*--WE **CAN'T** LET THE LADY FALL, **TOO!**

AND WE **WON'T**, VANCE--**CONTROL** YOURSELF!

SHOW THOR TO THE **TELEPORTER** WHILE I ENGAGE THE **AUTO-PILOT PROGRAM.**

*THE STARSHIP "CAPTAIN AMERICA" IN MARVEL PRESENTS #10--LEN.

SIX SPACE TRAVELERS AND ONE ASGARDIAN GOD **STEP** UPON THE GLOWING PLATE, AND EVEN AS THEIR **MOLECULAR STRUCTURES** ARE REDUCED TO **ELECTRO-MAGNETIC IMPULSES**--

--THE MIGHTY STARSHIP **RE-TREATS** TO A SAFER, MORE **DISTANT** ORBIT, ITS **AUTOMATIC SENSORS** AWAITING THE SIGNAL TO **RETURN**--

--WHILE **SEVEN FIGURES** MATERIALIZE ALMOST **INSTANTANEOUSLY** ON THE PLANET'S **SURFACE.**

I-I WASN'T EXPECTING **ANYTHING** LIKE **THIS!** THE PLACE IS LIKE SOMETHING OUT OF **LOST HORIZON!**

DO NOT MAKE YOURSELVES **TOO** COMFORTABLE, MY FRIENDS--OR THIS WORLD COULD EASILY BECOME YOUR **FINAL RESTING PLACE!**

WHAT?

CHAPTER FOUR THIS BATTLEGROUND PARADISE!

YOU ARE TRESPASSING ON **KORVAC'S WORLD!** LEAVE AT **ONCE** OR FACE THE **CONSEQUENCES!**

YOU **HEARD** 'IM-- **BEAT IT!**

GEEZ! SOME WELCOME WAGON!

BRIGANDS! WE HAVE NO QUARREL WITH THEE! STAND ASIDE OR--!

WAIT, THOR! THESE BEINGS ARE MERE UNDERLINGS!

IT IS THEIR MASTER--THIS KORVAC--WE MUST FIND!

WELL, WHAT'RE YOU WAITING FOR? GO ON AND GET THIS KORVAC GUY!

WE CAN HANDLE THESE CLOWNS!

AND WITHOUT HESITATION, TWO MIGHTY FIGURES TAKE TO THE SKIES...

THE POWER BEAM SEEMS TO EMANATE FROM THAT SPRAWLING STRUCTURE AHEAD.

THEN 'TIS THERE WE SHALL STRIKE!

WHILE BELOW...

WELL, CHARLIE--THANKS A LOT! YOU JUST SENT AWAY OUR TWO STRONGEST FIGHTERS!

AW--THESE GUYS WILL BE NO TROUBLE!

THINK SO, DO YA?

LET'S GO, CREW--

ATTACK!!

SSSTUPID MAMMAL! DO YOU THINK YOUR BULK CAN SSSAVE YOU FROM MY SSSLASHING TAIL?

WHUP!

DROP BACK, CHARLIE-- AND WE SHALL SEE IF HIS TAIL IS ANY DEFENSE AGAINST MY YAKA ARROWS!

I THINK NOT, MY FRIEND--

--NOT WHILE DUMOG IS AROUND!

AAGGH! MY LEG!

YA FELT THAT, HUH, DIAMOND JIM?

NOW YOU KNOW WHY THEY CALL GROTT... THE MANSLAYER!

HOLD STILL, GNAT!

NOT ON YOUR LIFE, UGLY!

LITTLE FOOL! SOONER OR LATER, TORK SHALL GET YOU!

YOUR PUNY WEAPON BARELY STINGS ME!

INTERESTING--MOST INTERESTING!

DO YOU REALIZE THAT YOUR PSYCHE-BLASTS ARE VERY SIMILAR TO THOSE OF MY LITTLE FRIEND GROTT?

YOU-- YOU'RE IN-TANGIBLE!

WHEN I WISH TO BE-- YES!

BUT EVEN AS THE GUARDIANS BATTLE **DESPERATELY** AGAINST KORVAC'S **MINIONS**, THOR AND STARHAWK REACH THEIR **GOAL**...

BLACKGUARD! THOR HATH **RETURNED**--FOR **VENGEANCE!**

BOOM

WHAT?! YOU?

I...**AM** IMPRESSED. BUT NOT EVEN YOU AND YOUR FRIEND **CAN STOP** MY PLANS **NOW!**

LOOK **ABOVE** YOU, THUNDER GOD!

WHEN THAT **TIME-CLOCK** REACHES **ZERO**, THE EARTH'S SUN WILL GO **NOVA**--

--**AND THEN, ALL THE POWER THUS GENERATED SHALL BE MINE!**

WHAT? THOU WOULDST **DOOM** THE ENTIRE **SOLAR SYSTEM?**

FIEND! NOT EVEN THE TRAGIC **GALACTUS** WAS SO **CALLOUS!**

INDEED! YOU MUST BE--

FAMP

--**STOPPED?**

BY THE ALL-FATHER! WE HAVE BEEN **RETURNED** TO OUR **POINT OF ENTRY!**

HIS **TELEPORTATION ABILITIES** BETRAY AN **UNPARALLELED** TECHNOLOGY!

WE **MUST** STOP HIM!

AYE... IF WE **CAN.**

WELL, BACK SO **SOON**? **HA-HA-HA!** WE CAN FIX **THAT!**

AND ONCE AGAIN...

FA MP

HE--HE **TOYS** WITH US--AS WOULD A **CAT** WITH A **MOUSE!**

BUT NOT FOR **LONG!** HIS OWN **DEVICE** HAS **BETRAYED** HIM!

THERE--THAT BANK OF **MACHINERY** TO HIS **LEFT!** ITS **INDICATOR LIGHT** HAS **GLOWED** EACH TIME WE WERE **TELEPORTED!**

THEN **STAND** THEE **ASIDE**, STARHAWK--

--FOR BY THE GOLDEN GATES OF ASGARD, YON DEVICE WILL BEDEVIL US NO MORE!

SPLANG

WHA--?

FOOL! DO YOU THINK **THAT** WILL **SAVE YOU?**

TELEPORTATION IS BUT **ONE** OF THE **MANY WEAPONS** AT MY **DISPOSAL!**

THEN **UNLEASH** THY **WORST**, JACKAL! WE SHALL FACE IT **ALL LIKE WARRIORS BORN!**

AND WE SHALL NOT **STOP** UNTIL YOU ARE **DEFEATED!**

WELL, THEN -- LET'S SEE HOW YOU FARE AGAINST THE IMPENETRABLE BARRIER OF MY STASIS FIELD!

DEMON! I'LL--!

NO, THOR-- WAIT! BRUTE STRENGTH IS USELESS AGAINST SUCH A FIELD!

KLIK KLIK

BUT NOT SO THE POWER OF A LIVING STAR!

I AM THE LIGHT AND THE GIVER OF LIGHT-- AND NO MERE ENERGY FIELD CAN LONG STAND THE FULL FURY OF MY POWER!

NO! KORVAC SHALL NOT BE STOPPED! I'VE COME TOO FAR! YOU SHALL INTRUDE UPON MY WONDERWORLD NO FURTHER!

KLAK

I WILL NOT LET YOU DE-STROY THIS PARADISE!

NAY, SIRRAH! 'TIS NOT A PARADISE THAT IS BUILT ON THE BODIES OF INNOCENT BEINGS!

THERE IS BUT ONE WORD FOR SUCH AN ACT AS THINE-- MADNESS!

THOU ART AS MAD AS THE TERRORISTS OF YORE--SPEAKING OF LIBERTY, BUT DEALING IN DEATH!

YOU MISJUDGE ME, THUNDER GOD!

COULD A MADMAN DEVISE THIS?

OUT FROM AN EMPTY EYE-SOCKET PULSES KORVAC'S EERIE LIGHT--

--STRIKING THE TWO BOLD WARRIORS, AND ERUPTING IN A CHURNING MIASMA OF COLOR THAT SEEMS TO SLICE INTO THEIR VERY MINDS--

--WITH STARTLING RESULTS.

IF YOU'RE SO EAGER TO FIGHT, THEN YOU SHALL FIGHT EACH OTHER!

MY NEURAL BEAM WILL KEEP YOU BATTLING UNTIL YOU BOTH DROP!

THOR... I...MUST FIGHT...

BY MY TROTH--MY LIMBS WILL NOT OBEY!

I...FEEL COMPELLED TO...KILL STARHAWK!

BUT AS THE TWO TITANS RUSH AT ONE ANOTHER, THE GUARDIANS FIND THEMSELVES ON THE LOSING END OF ANOTHER BATTLE...

UHH!

FORGET IT, GEM! ANOTHER FEW BLASTS, AND YOU'VE HAD IT!

HE'S RIGHT! IT'S JUST A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE HE SHATTERS MY CRYSTALLINE BODY.

BUT IF I MUST FALL--

--I'LL TAKE A FEW OF THEM WITH ME!

A BLAST OF EXTREME CRYOGENIC FORCE SURGES OUT FROM THE PLUVIAN'S HAND--

--INSTANTLY FREEZING THE BLOB INTO A SOLID MASS.

MARTINEX, YOU HAVE SHOWN ME THE PATH TO VICTORY!

WE MUST SWITCH OUR OPPONENTS!

WHAT'S THIS? THAT ARROW--IT'S VIBRATIONS ARE DISRUPTING MY BODY!

I- I'M LOSING CONTROL--

--BECOMING... SOLID...

THUD!

THANKS, YON! THAT'S TWO DOWN!

ALL RIGHT, MISTER--

--LET'S SEE IF YOUR HEAD IS AS HARD AS YOUR TAIL!

CHARLIE-- SEE TO NIKKI!

HSSSS!

WILL DO, BOSS!

YOU'RE SLOWING DOWN, GAMIN-- GOOD!

IT WILL BE OVER SOON NOW!

YOU'RE RIGHT ABOUT THAT, PAL--

FRAK

--BUT NOT THE WAY YOU THINK!

KA-

BLAM

AND NOW, GROTT--!

YOU THINK YOU'VE GOT ME, DON'T YOU?

IN A WORD... YES!

YOU'RE NOT GOING TO GIVE ME ANY TROUBLE!

LISTEN, YOU JERKS-- I WAS GOING EASY ON DIAMOND BOY THERE! I ALMOST TOTALLED THE HULK ONCE*--

--JUST LIKE I'M GONNA CREAM YOU!

*GIANT-SIZE DEFENDERS #3 --LEN.

I'VE NEVER HEARD OF THIS HULK, JUNIOR--

--SO PARDON ME IF I DON'T QUAKE IN FEAR!

BRRTTTZZZ

OH NO.

MY ANTENNA!
SHE SNICKED OFF MY ANTENNA!
IT'LL TAKE ME A YEAR TO GROW 'EM BACK!
YAAAAHHH!
BOY, THEY JUST DON'T MAKE MANSLAYERS LIKE THEY USED TO!
WELL, NOW THAT THE GOON SQUAD IS TAKEN OUT-- LET'S GO FIND THOR AND STARHAWK!
SOUNDS ALL RIGHT BY ME, VANCE-- BUT I REALLY THINK THAT THOSE TWO CAN TAKE CARE OF THEMSELVES.
MAYBE SO, BUT I'LL FEEL A LOT BETTER ONCE I KNOW JUST WHAT THEY'RE FIGHTING!
PERHAPS NOT, MAJOR!
X MINUS 000'S
THOR...WE MUST... FIGHT...THIS COMPULSION! TIME IS... RUNNING OUT!
I...KNOW, MY FRIEND. BUT...'TIS AS IF...THE WARRIOR MADNESS WAS... UPON ME!
THOUGH I... STRUGGLE WITH ALL MY MIGHT...I CAN... DO NAUGHT BUT... LESSEN THE FORCE... OF MY BLOWS.
THEN...WE MUST FIGHT IN EARNEST... INCREASE THE FORCE OF BATTLE... UNTIL WE DESTROY THIS CITADEL!
NAY... 'TWOULD MEAN THY DEATH!
MY LIFE... MEANS LITTLE. WE MUST...STOP KORVAC!
THEN, MAY ODIN FORGIVE ME...
HAVE AT THEE!
THE VERY AIR OF THE CHAMBER SEEMS TO THROB WITH THE FURY OF THEIR CONFLICT. NEVER BEFORE HAS THERE BEEN SUCH A CONFRONTATION--
--A BATTLE BETWEEN MAN-LIKE GOD AND GOD-LIKE MAN, WITH NO QUARTER GIVEN, NO HOLDS BARRED!
IT IS TRULY A BATTLE OUT OF TIME-- A STRUGGLE OF MYTHOS VERSUS SUPER SCIENCE-- WITH THE EXISTENCE OF A SOLAR SYSTEM HANGING IN THE BALANCE!

FRAM

THOOM

THIS IS THE STUFF OF WHICH LEGENDS ARE MADE--

--THE SORT OF BATTLE WHICH LITERALLY BRINGS DOWN THE HOUSE!

NO! IT--IT IS NOT POSSIBLE!

MY LABS WERE BUILT TO WITH-STAND THE MIGHTIEST OF EARTHQUAKES!

IT CAN'T END THIS WAY! IT MUSTN'T!

HAVE TO FALL BACK ON MY EMER-GENCY RE-SOURCES--

--TELEPORT AWAY...

FAMP

KA-BLAM!

AND WITH KORVAC'S DEPARTURE--

THE SPELL IS LIFTED!

STARHAWK-- ART THOU--?

I... WILL BE FINE, THOR!

QUICKLY, WE MUST STOP KORVAC'S POWER BEAM!

HERE--HERE IS THE CENTRAL CONSOLE!

BUT THE CONTROLS ARE JAMMED-- THE NOVA-CYCLE IS BEGINNING!

THEN THERE BE NO TIME TO SPARE!

THIS INFERNAL DEVICE MUST CEASE TO BE!

BLAM!

KLA-BLAM!

1001

FOR A MOMENT, THE TWO STAND IN **SOLEMN SILENCE**. DESTRUCTION OF THE SOLAR SYSTEM HAS BEEN **AVERTED**--

--WITH **LESS** THAN A **MINUTE** TO SPARE.

WE MUST **QUIT** THIS PLACE AT **ONCE!**

NO, MY FRIEND-- NOT "**WE**"!

YOU BELONG TO **ANOTHER TIME**-- ANOTHER **PLACE**.

FARE YOU **WELL**, THOR! WE SHALL MEET **AGAIN**.

AND, **OUTSIDE** THE STRUCTURE...

I **THINK** WE FOUND 'EM!

GOOD LORD! THAT PLACE IS READY TO--

"--**COLLAPSE!**"

BLA-

THOOM!

THE BATTLE IS **WON**, GUARDIANS! THE **THREAT** OF KORVAC IS **ENDED**.

BUT--**THOR**-- **WHERE'S THOR?**

THOR HAS BEEN RETURNED TO HIS OWN ERA.

I CAN ASSURE YOU, IT WAS FOR THE BEST--ON MY WORD AS ONE-WHO-KNOWS!

YEAH? GEE, I WISH WE'D HAD A CHANCE TO SAY GOOD-BYE.

TO THINK THAT A GOD WALKED AMONG US--!

WELL, HE WAS OKAY-- BUT I'M NOT GONNA LOSE ANY SLEEP OVER HIM!

AND, BACK IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY...

I CAN'T GET OVER IT! IT'S AS IF SOME GIANT SCOOPED HIM UP AND CARRIED HIM OFF!

WELL, COME AWAY FROM THERE, YOU TWO!

WE'VE WASTED ENOUGH TIME HERE. AND I'LL NEED YOUR HELP FILING THE BLASTED REPORTS!

BUT NO SOONER DO THE OFFICERS CROSS THE ROOM, THAN...

FAMP

ALL RIGHT, I GIVE UP! HOW'D YA DO IT?

HOW DID YOU MANAGE TO MAKE YOURSELF AND THAT REACTOR VANISH FOR THE BETTER PART OF TEN HOURS?

CAPTAIN--

--IF I TOLD THEE, THOU WOULDST NOT BELIEVE ME!

OUT INTO THE NIGHT STRIDES THE GOD OF THUNDER-- AND FOR A LONG TIME, HE STARES OFF INTO THE STAR-FLECKED FIRMAMENT, HIS HEART AGLOW WITH MEMORIES OF COMRADES YET TO COME...

FARE THEE WELL, GUARDIANS--

AYE... FARE THEE WELL.

FIN

The Mighty Thor #258 cover original art
by Jack Kirby & John Verpoorten

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #257, page 16 original art
by John Buscema & Tony DeZuniga

•003312 MIGHTY THOR

MILADY SIF, ART THOU WELL? DID THE DEMON-BEAST HARM THEE?
I AM VERY WELL INDEED! SPORR TOOK THE GREATEST CARE OF ME!
WHERE IS THAT MOST GENTLE CREATURE, THOR? IS HE WITH THEE?
G-GENTLE CREATURE...? I-- I DON'T UNDERSTAND, MILADY!
FAIR SIF, THE MONSTROUS SPORR HATH BEEN SLAIN!
NAY, NOT HIM-- NOT THAT WONDERFUL TENDER BEING!
WHY? WHY??
AND WHEN THE PRINCE OF ASGARD HAS EXPLAINED...
OH, MY LOVE-- THOU KNOWEST NOT WHAT THOU HAST DONE!
THOU HAST DESTROYED A LOST AND LONELY CREATURE WHO WAS THE LAST OF HIS RACE--A BEING WHO MEANT TO DO ONLY GOOD--
--AS BEST HE COULD UNDERSTAND THE TERM!
SPORR MEANT NO HARM TO THE PEOPLE OF LEVIANON-- HE SOUGHT ONLY TO HELP THEM!
HE TOOK THOSE WHO WERE TOO OLD TO FEND FOR THEMSELVES ANY LONGER IN THIS TECHNOLOGICAL WASTELAND-- AND CREATED A HAVEN FOR THEM HERE!
A PLACE WHERE THEY COULD SPEND THEIR FINAL DAYS IN PEACE!
"ANY DAMAGE HE MIGHT HAVE CAUSED WAS PURELY ACCIDENTAL--HIS ALIEN FORM WAS FAR TOO UNWIELDY TO EASILY MANEUVER IN THIS STRANGE ENVIRONMENT!
"AND BECAUSE OF HIS ALIEN FORM--BECAUSE OF THESE PEOPLE'S BLIND, UNREASONING FEAR--ALL THE GOOD HE SOUGHT TO DO HAS GONE FOR NAUGHT!"
SPORR OFFERED THE PEOPLE OF LEVIANON A VERITABLE PARADISE, MY LOVE...
...AND THEIR FEAR TRANSFORMED IT INTO A HELL!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

The Mighty Thor #258, page 17 original art
by John Buscema & Tony DeZuniga

MIGHTY THOR

THUS, SHORTLY...
IT DOTH MAKE MY BLOOD FAIRLY BOIL TO WITNESS SUCH VILE DEGRADATION!
BUT SURELY 'TWILL NOT REMAIN THUS FOR LONG, MILORD THOR.

AND WHEN THE CAPTIVE ASGARDIANS HAVE AT LAST BEEN LEFT ALONE...
HAST THOU DEVISED A WAY TO FREE US AS THOU DIDST PROMISE, MY LOVE?
MOST RELUCTANTLY, FAIR SIF, I SAY THEE... NAY.
SO LONG AS WE WEAR THESE CURSED SLAVE-SHACKLES, ANY ESCAPE WE MIGHT ATTEMPT WOULD COME TO NAUGHT!
IF ONLY...

INTERJECTION: IF IT IS ONLY THESE SHACKLES THAT STAND IN OUR WAY, THUNDER GOD...
...PERHAPS THERE IS SOMETHING THAT I CAN DO TO RESOLVE YOUR DILEMMA!

STATEMENT: I AM A NON-CELLULAR THINKING MACHINE, CONSTRUCTED IN HUMANOID FORM. IT IS MY FUNCTION TO RECORD ALL THAT I OBSERVE...
...AND, IN THIS CASE ESPECIALLY, THAT FUNCTION HAS SERVED ME WELL!
WHAT MEANEST THOU, RECORDER?

STATEMENT: I HAVE DEVOTED THESE PAST HOURS TO CAREFULLY STUDYING THE CONSTRUCTION OF THESE SHACKLES ABOUT OUR NECKS...
...IN HOPES OF DISCOVERING SOME WAY TO RELEASE US FROM THEIR TERRIBLE POWER!
OBSERVATION: APPARENTLY, I HAVE SUCCEEDED IN MY CHOSEN TASK!

Courtesy HeritageAuctions.com

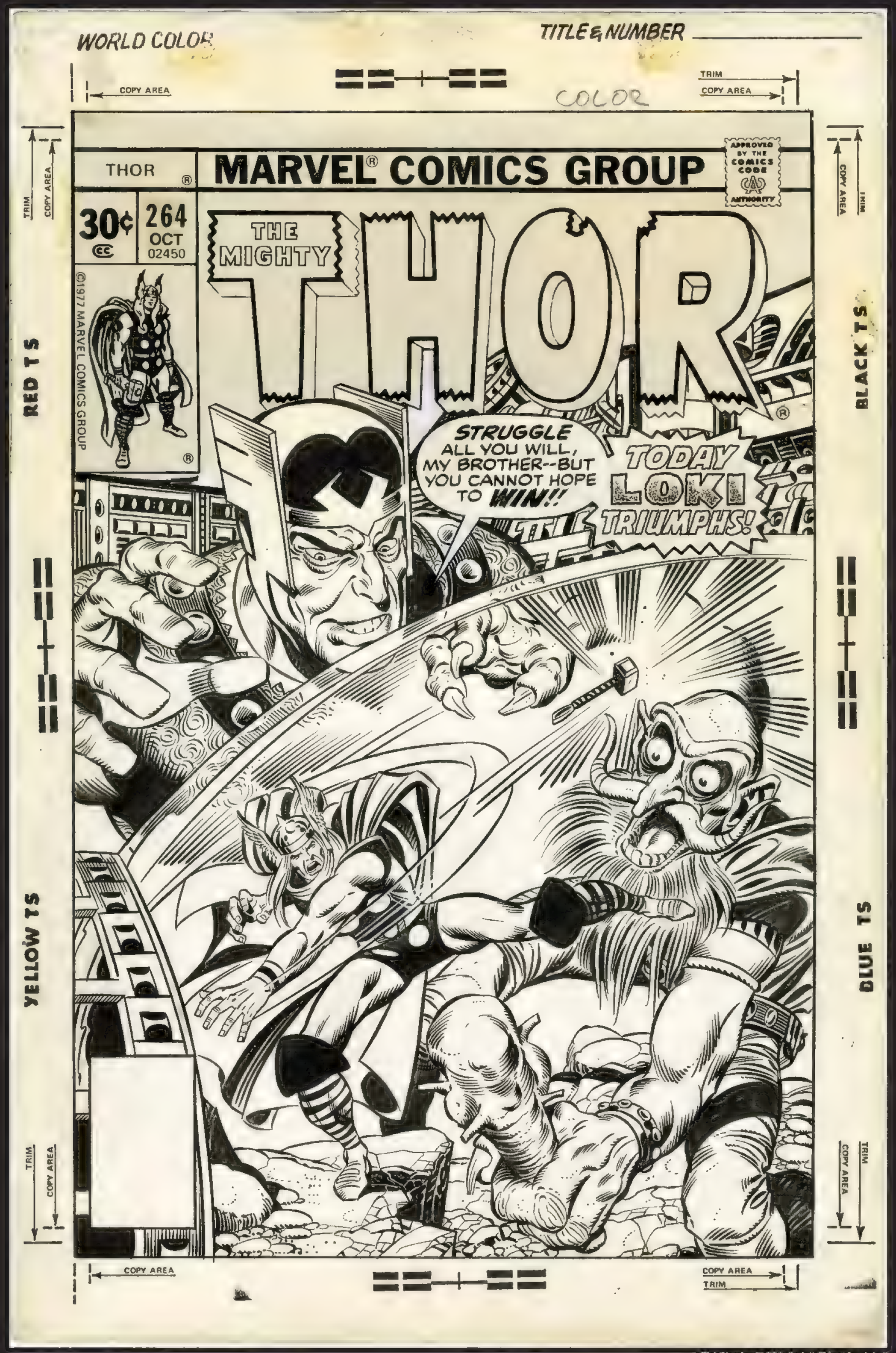
The Mighty Thor #260 cover pencil layout
by Walter Simonson

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #260 cover original art
by Walter Simonson & Joe Sinnott

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #264 cover original art with Simonson's original version of Thor's head and face; by Walter Simonson & Joe Sinnott



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The Mighty Thor #266 cover original art
by Walter Simonson & Joe Sinnott

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #261, page 1 pencil layout
by Walter Simonson

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #261, page 1 original art
by Walter Simonson & Ernie Chan

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

Stan Lee PRESENTS: THE MIGHTY THOR!™

Len Wein WRITER/EDITOR | **Walt Simonson & Ernie Chan** ILLUSTRATORS SUPREME | **Glynis Wein** COLORIST | **Annette K.** LETTERER

THEY HAVE COME FAR, THESE VALIANT SOULS--PAST WORLDS BEYOND NUMBERING, TO THE FURTHEST EDGES OF THE UNIVERSE, IN SEARCH OF THE LONG-MISSING ODIN, MONARCH OF IMMORTAL ASGARD!

WE ARE BESIEGED, GOOD COMRADES--BY A BATTERY OF PHOTON-BLASTERS!

OH, WOULDST THAT VALOROUS VOLSTAGG WERE NOT SUCH A TEMPTING TARGET!

NOW, AT LAST, IT SEEMS THEIR LENGTHY QUEST MAY SOON BE OVER--FOR THERE IS BUT ONE FINAL OBSTACLE WHICH STANDS BETWEEN THEM AND THEIR GOAL!

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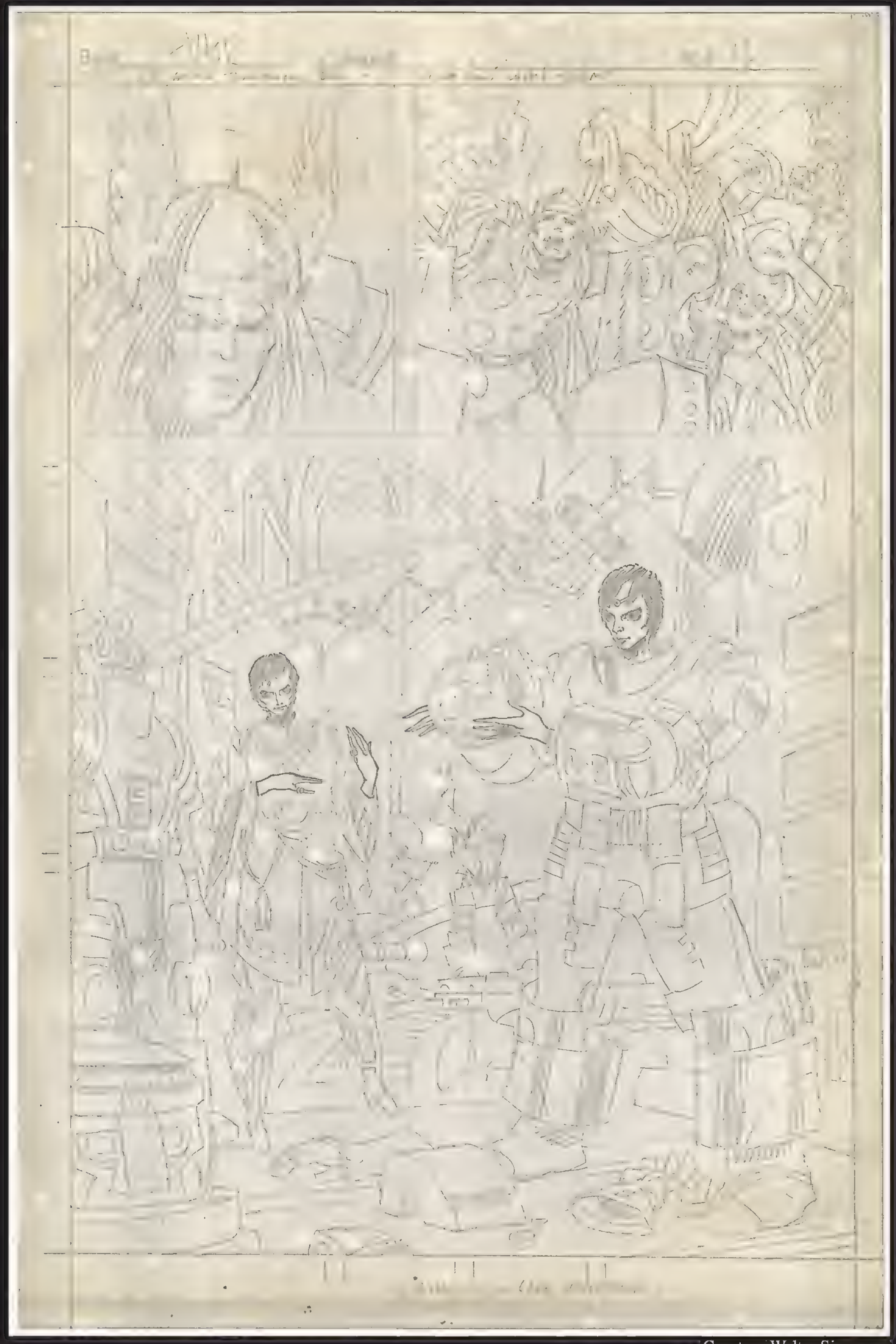

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #261, page 16 original art
by Walter Simonson & Ernie Chan

DARKNESS SWELLS AND EBBS LIKE A SHADOWY TIDE, CARRYING THE SON OF ODIN ACROSS AN ETERNAL SEA--UNTIL, AT LAST, HE IS WASHED UP ON THE LONELY SHORE CALLED CONSCIOUSNESS...
WH-WHERE... AM... I?
WHAT HAST THOU DONE TO ME--AND TO MY FAITHFUL COMRADES?
SPEAK, I COMMAND THEE-- ANSWER ME!
All of your questions will be answered in due time, my lord Thor.
For now, all you need know is that you are among those who are sworn to worship you all the rest of your days.
At the moment, for want of a better name, you may call us ...the SOUL-SURVIVORS!

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Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #262, page 17 original art
by Walter Simonson & Tony DeZuniga

MIGHTY THOR #262
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NO, THUNDER GOD! UNLESS YOU SURRENDER THIS INSTANT, IT IS YOU WHO SHALL BE DESTROYED--
--DESTROYED BY THE ONE POWER THAT DWARFS EVEN YOURS...
...THE POWER OF YOUR OWN ALMIGHTY FATHER!!
'TIS THE LIVING ODIN-FORCE-- EMBODIED IN HUMANOID FORM!
BY HELA! WE ARE LOST!!
NEXT ISSUE:
THE QUEST AT LONG LAST ENDS, IN THE MOST UNEXPECTED FASHION OF ALL! BE HERE FOR...
HOLOCAUST...AND HOMECOMING!
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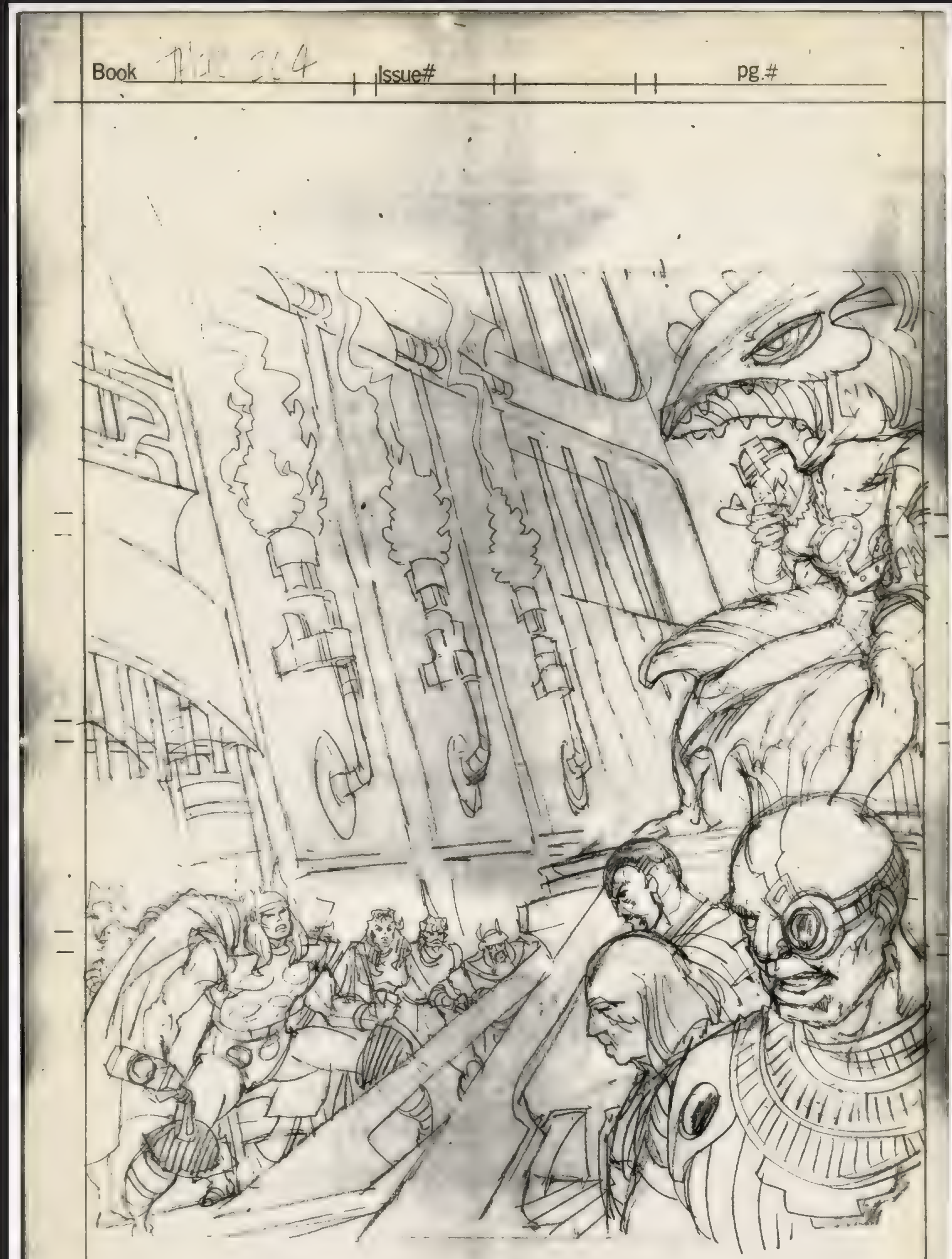
Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #263, page 17 original art
by Walter Simonson & Tony DeZuniga

THOR
263
31
17
WHY BE THOU SO SURPRISED, GOD OF THUNDER? SURELY THOU DIDST EXPECT AS MUCH!
AFTER ALL, WHO BETTER TO SIT THE THRONE OF IMMORTAL ASGARD IN THE UNTIMELY ABSENCE OF OMIPOTENT ODIN AND THEE, THAN THINE OWN MOST ABLE BROTHER...
LOKI!!
NEXT ISSUE:
WITH THE ENCHANTRESS AND THE EXECUTIONER BESIDE HIM, THE GOD OF EVIL STRIKES! BE HERE FOR...
"THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!"
31

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #264, page 1 pencil layout
by Walter Simonson



Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #264, page 1 original art
by Walter Simonson & Tony DeZuniga

MIGHTY T. 264 PG. 1

When lame Dr. DONALD BLAKE strikes his wooden walking stick upon the ground, it becomes the mystic mallet MJOLNIR—and Blake is transformed into the Norse God of Thunder, Master of the Storm and the Lightning, Heir to the Throne of Immortal Asgard...

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GLYNIS WEIN ✶ COLORIST
JOE ROSEN ✶ LETTERER

THOU SHALT HAVE NO OTHER GODS BEFORE ME!

KNOW YE THIS! THE QUEST FOR THE LONG-MISSING ODIN AT LAST IS OVER!

BONE-WEARY BUT UNBOWED, THE THUNDER GOD AND HIS STALWART COMPANIONS HAVE RETURNED WITH THE MUCH-WEAKENED ALL-FATHER TO IMMORTAL ASGARD, TO FIND THEIR TROUBLES BE NOT YET ENDED...

...FOR THE MALEVOLENT LOKI, GOD OF ALL-CONSUMING EVIL--AND THOR'S OWN HALF-BROTHER--NOW SITS THE GOLDEN THRONE!

WHY LOOKEST THOU SO STUNNED, THUNDER GOD? AM I NOT, AFTER ALL, NEXT IN LINE TO INHERIT THE MANTLE OF POWER?

IS IT NOT ONLY FITTING THEN, THAT LOKI NOW RULES THE REALM ETERNAL!?

AND WE, HIS LOYAL SERVITORS, STAND READY TO SLAY THOSE WHO WILL NOT BEND TO LOKI'S WILL!

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Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #264, page 17 pencil layout
by Walter Simonson

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #264, page 17 original art
by Walter Simonson & Tony DeZuniga

MIGHTY THOR Issue# 264 pg # 31

IT LUMBERS FORTH IN **SILENCE**, SAVE FOR THE PONDEROUS TREAD OF ITS OWN ARMOR-CLAD **FEET**--

--ITS MIGHTY MAILED **FISTS** CASUALLY **SHATTERING** ANYTHING AND **EVERYTHING** THAT CHANCES TO LIE IN ITS WAY!

FOR THIS BATTLE-BRED BEHEMOTH WAS CREATED BY ALMIGHTY **ODIN** HIMSELF TO BE THE LIVING EMBODIMENT OF **VICTORY**, UNSTOPPABLE, UNBEATABLE...

...AND **WOE** BE UNTO HIM WHO FIRST CROSSES THE BLOODY **PATH** OF...

THE DESTROYER!!

NEXT ISSUE: **WHEN FALLS THE GOD OF THUNDER...!**

31

THOU SHALT BE HERE, RIGHT?

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #266, page 16 pencil layout
by Walter Simonson

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #266, page 16 original art
by Walter Simonson & Tony DeZuniga

MIGHTY THOR 266 16 27

AND IF THOU HADST HAD THY *WAY*, MY SON--'TWOULD *NOT* BE!

BUT *WHO* THEN, PRAY TELL, WOULD BE LEFT TO *SAVE* THEE FROM THE RAMPAGING *DESTROYER*?

WHO DOTH POSSESS THE MATCHLESS *STRENGTH*-- SAVE ALMIGHTY *ODIN*?

IN TRUTH, WHO DOTH POSSESS THE *POWER* SAVE THY RIGHTFUL *LORD AND LIEGE*?

LET ALL NOW PRESENT *BEND THEIR KNEE* BEFORE HIM WHO BE *MONARCH OVER ALL!*

DOWN UPON THY *KNEE*, I SAY THEE, NOBLE *THOR!*

NAY, MILORD-- THE THUNDER GOD WILL NOT *HEED* THEE!

THE *KILLING FURY* IS UPON HIM-- AND ONLY OUR *DEATHS* WILL SLAKE HIS *THIRST!*

*SLOWLY, THE ARMORED BEHEMOTH **STRIDES** TOWARD THE RULER OF IMMORTAL ASGARD--*

*--MURDEROUS POWER **SEETHING** FROM BENEATH HIS LOWERED **VISOR**--*

*--UNTIL, MERE **INCHES** AWAY FROM THE DARK-EYED **ODIN**, THE DESTROYER **PAUSES**--*

*--THEN LOWERS HIS OUT-STRETCHED **FIST**--*

*--**BOWS** HIS GLEAMING HEAD--*

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CONTINUED AFTER NEXT PAGE

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #266, page 17 pencil layout
by Walter Simonson

Courtesy Walter Simonson

The Mighty Thor #266, page 17 original art
by Walter Simonson & Tony DeZuniga

--AND GENTLY BENDS HIS KNEE!!

FATHER... I... AM... THY... SERVANT!

THEN, WITH A GESTURE BOTH **FORCEFUL** AND YET SOMEHOW **TENDER**--

--THE ALMIGHTY ODIN **RELEASES** THE THUNDER GOD'S SPIRIT FROM ITS DREADFUL ARMORED **PRISON**--

--AND TAKES HIS WORN AND BLOODIED **SON** INTO HIS **ARMS!**

'TIS **OVER**, FLESH OF MY FLESH--

--AND, AS EVER, THOU HAST MADE THY FATHER **PROUD!**

Courtesy Walter Simonson

BIOGRAPHIES

LEN WEIN

Len Wein's career is highlighted by successes from Swamp Thing to the "All-New, All-Different" X-Men, but few fans know that the award-winning writer and editor started out as a comic-book artist.

As a teenager, Wein was tied to the hip with fellow fanzine writer Marv Wolfman, regularly skipping school to tour the DC Comics offices. After building a rapport with artists and execs like Dick Giordano, Carmine Infantino and Joe Orlando, Wein was able to credibly pitch to the editors. Though his artwork was politely passed upon, a script for *House of Mystery* was accepted and a career as a writer was born. Len attacked his new occupation with gusto, writing for DC, Marvel, Gold Key and Skywald, on everything from Western to horror, and licensed properties from Hot Wheels to Star Trek.

Although his desired career as an artist didn't quite pan out, it did give Wein insight into his collaborator's creative process and helped him garner acclaim as a writer that was "easy to draw." After super-hero work in the early '70s (Daredevil, Superman, Flash), he and artist Bernie Wrightson launched horror mainstay Swamp Thing in the pages of *House of Secrets* #92. Other notable achievements from his tenure at DC include a run on *Justice League of America* and the debut of the Human Target.

Hopping over to Marvel in 1974, where he followed Roy Thomas as editor in chief, Wein scripted several series, including *Incredible Hulk*, where he and artist Herb Trimpe introduced one of comics' most famous characters—Wolverine. That wasn't the end of his mutant milestones, as with artist Dave Cockrum he revived the dormant X-Men property with a new international cast. Its cadre of characters, including Storm, Nightcrawler and Colossus would shortly turn into comics' biggest phenomenon.

Returning to DC, Wein helped spur a creative revival at the company, editing *New Teen Titans*, *Camelot 3000* and *Swamp Thing*, which gave writer Alan Moore his American debut; shortly thereafter, Wein would preside over Moore and Dave Gibbon's groundbreaking *Watchmen*. Since then, Wein's credits in comics, animation and television writing have been numerous and well received as witnessed by his 2008 induction into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

JOHN BUSCEMA

Though primarily known for his long tenure as one of Marvel Comics' most prolific pencilers, John Buscema began his celebrated career at the age of 21 with Timely Comics. After Timely closed its in-house Bullpen, Buscema pursued comics work for a time before he left comics altogether for advertising in 1958.

When he returned to comics, however, he did so with a vengeance. Stan Lee recruited him away from advertising and quickly ensconced him into the upper ranks of Marvel artists. Picking up where *Avengers* mainstay Don Heck left off, "Big John" began what would be one of the title's definitive artistic runs. The much-anticipated *Silver Surfer* series was launched with Buscema at the helm, and top-tier books like *Fantastic Four* and *Thor* were entrusted to his care after Jack Kirby left Marvel for DC Comics.

Buscema's bold, muscular artwork commanded the comic-book page with realistic figurework that represented the next evolutionary step in post-Kirby Marvel Comics style. The respect accorded him within Marvel as an artist's artist was of such renown that he literally wrote the book on drawing, composing *How To Draw Comics the Marvel Way* with Stan Lee, the classic "how to" book in comic-book illustration.

He worked from the '70s through the '90s on nearly every title in the Marvel stable, including his personal favorite, *Conan the Barbarian*, with Roy Thomas. He retired in 1996, but returned every now and then to the comics scene until he passed away after a battle with cancer in 2002, the same year he was inducted into the Eisner Hall of Fame.

WALTER SIMONSON

Walter Simonson mixed the power of Jack Kirby comics with an experimental European influence to produce a visual style that has made him one of his generation's foremost innovators.

After achieving acclaim for DC's "Manhunter" feature in *Detective Comics*, Simonson moved to Marvel's black-and-white magazine line where he illustrated an adaptation of Robert E. Howard's "The Hyborean Age" and penciled the first three issues of *Rampaging Hulk*. Next came a yearlong stint on *Thor* that would be far from his last encounter with the Asgardian hero. Simonson soon made a decisive shift to sci-fi. Adaptations of *Close Encounters of the Third Time* for Marvel and *Alien: The Illustrated Story* in *Heavy Metal* were followed by runs on *Battlestar Galactica*, which featured Simonson's first writing credits, and *Star Wars*. Simonson continued to develop his craft as a writer on Marvel's *Raiders of the Lost Ark* adaptation and *Marvel Graphic Novel* #6: *Star Slammers*, a concept revived from his art school days that he wrote, penciled and inked.

In 1982, Simonson teamed with writer Chris Claremont on the DC/Marvel crossover team-up of the X-Men and New Teen

Titans. Shortly thereafter, he began his epochal run scripting and penciling *Thor*, the first issue of which introduced Beta Ray Bill and became one of the most highly acclaimed titles of the period. His collaboration with his wife, Louise, on *X-Factor* included the introduction of Archangel and Apocalypse. Later, the husband and wife team would write the *Havok & Wolverine: Meltdown* prestige miniseries.

In the early '90s, Simonson had a memorable run writing and drawing *Fantastic Four*. Other credits from this era included the *Iron Man: 2020* one-shot and *Avengers*. More recent work has included *Orion* at DC, *Elric: The Making of a Sorceror* with Michael Moorcock and *Avengers* and *Indestructible Hulk* for Marvel.

SAL BUSCEMA

Without a doubt one of comics' most prolific artists, "Our Pal" Sal Buscema joined Marvel in 1968 shortly after his elder brother, John. Tackling inking duties on *Silver Surfer* and *Fantastic Four*, including the all-time classic *Silver Surfer* #4, Buscema quickly graduated to penciling. He was an anchor of the Marvel line in the 1970s with long runs on books like *Captain America*, *Marvel Team-Up* and *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and a 100-plus issue run on *The Incredible Hulk*. Buscema was also behind defining the tone on early issues of *The Defenders*, *Rom* and *The New Mutants*. His career as one of Marvel's most versatile artists lasted throughout the '70s and into the '90s. In 1988, he returned to *The Spectacular Spider-Man* and over the next ten years penciled every issue but two from #134 through #238 (and inked the vast majority as well!) Although he retired in the late '90s, readers can still see his name on comics credits from time to time, including inking work on the cult hit *Spider-Girl*.

TONY DEZUNIGA

In 1971, Tony DeZuniga became the first Filipino artist to break into mainstream American comics. His prolific work penciling and inking Marvel and DC Comics launched a wave of creative talent from his Pacific homeland, a milestone for which he is fondly remembered by those who followed him. He first came to New York in 1962 on a student visa and returned for good as an artist in 1968. His first work in comics was a 1971 backup story in DC's *The Phantom Stranger*. Among all the many genres he worked on in his early days, the one that he really latched on to was Westerns. It was in *All-Star Western* #10 that DeZuniga drew the first appearance of weird Western anti-hero Jonah Hex, who he would continue to draw for several years thereafter. He also originated Black Orchid with writer Sheldon Mayer in the pages of *Adventure Comics*. Arguably his biggest moment at Marvel was when he pinch hit for John Byrne on *The X-Men* #110, drawing the infamous "baseball" issue. He would later work in video game design for Sega and freelance for TSR and various publishing companies. One of his last works in comics was the 2010 Jonah Hex graphic novel *No Way Back*. DeZuniga passed away in 2012 at the age of 79.

ROGER STERN

Born in Noblesville, Indiana, in 1950, Roger Stern was a self-professed "child of the '50s," immersing himself in pop culture icons like Lucille Ball, the Lone Ranger, and especially Superman. After graduating from Indiana University, Stern worked at Indianapolis' WXLW radio and formed a comic fan collective with fans in the region. Stern teamed with fellow Hoosier Bob Layton to transform Layton's comic sales business into the fanzine *CPL* (*Contemporary Pictorial Literature*). Their efforts led to an offer from Charlton to create the publisher's official fanzine, *Charlton Bullseye*. Soon after, Stern's fandom pal Roger Slifer contacted him with an opportunity to interview for a Marvel staff job. Stern raced to New York to put his passion for comics to the test. He was hired as an assistant editor and in 1975 embarked on an eleven-year career at Marvel. Stern's early editing duties saw him guiding the Avengers family of titles, *Master of Kung Fu*, *Spider-Woman*, and others. He also presided over *X-Men* during the seminal Chris Claremont, John Byrne, and Terry Austin run, and plotted *Marvel Premiere* #50 starring rocker Alice Cooper.

In 1978, he began to take on regular writing work on *The Incredible Hulk* and *Doctor Strange*. His compelling storytelling quickly earned him an audience and turns writing *Captain America* and Spider-Man in *The Spectacular Spider-Man*. The latter title led to his tenure on *The Amazing Spider-Man*, a run regarded by many as second only to Stan Lee's. Amongst their many Spidey highlights, Stern and artist John Romita Jr. introduced the Hobgoblin and a new Captain Marvel, Monica Rambeau. Stern also began a long stint on *The Avengers*, launched *West Coast Avengers*, and returned for another celebrated run on *Doctor Strange*.

When his tenure with Marvel came to an end in the late '80s, Stern became indelibly linked to the Man of Steel with iconic work that included "The Death of Superman." Since then "Uncle Rog," as he is known to his devoted fans, has returned to Marvel to write several series including *Avengers Forever*, *Amazing Spider-Man*, *Marvel: The Lost Generation*, *Captain America Corps*, and more.

Biographies researched and written by John Rhett Thomas

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS LIBRARY

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NICK FURY, AGENT OF S.H.I.E.L.D. VOLS. 1-3
NOT BRAND ECHH VOL. 1
RAWHIDE KID VOLS. 1-2
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THE MARVEL AGE

It was August 1961 and change was hitting the newsstands. *Fantastic Four* #1 did not feature the squeaky-clean heroes of yesteryear. These were real characters placed in extraordinary circumstances. They lived together, they fought among themselves—and sometimes, they even lost to the bad guys. This was more than a change in attitude: It was the beginning of something entirely different—the Marvel Age of Comics!

Thanks to the fertile imaginations of Stan Lee, Jack Kirby, Steve Ditko and others, an unending list of heroes followed the FF with ever-increasing acclaim and popularity: the Amazing Spider-Man, the Mighty Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Daredevil, Iron Man and the X-Men, to name but a few. These were the Marvel heroes, born of conflict and a continuous struggle to balance human lives with superhuman responsibilities.

The *Marvel Masterworks* series was created to give comic-book readers everywhere the chance to experience the greatest comics the world has known as they were originally presented.

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WARLOCK VOLS. 1-2
THE X-MEN VOLS. 1-8
THE UNCANNY X-MEN VOLS. 1-10

THE GOLDEN AGE

As the Great Depression wore on and the specter of war hung over the heads of all Americans, a new entertaining escape from the newspapers' horrifying realities was born: the comic book. Within their four-color pages, larger-than-life super heroes could make short work of America's foes, giving readers of all ages hope for victory against the real-life enemies that faced the United States.

At the forefront of this new medium was Timely Comics, a young company staffed by such legendary talents as Carl Burgos, Bill Everett, Joe Simon, Jack Kirby and Stan Lee. These skilled writers and artists created a vast array of characters that would give rise to the Marvel Universe!

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ATLAS ERA STRANGE TALES VOLS. 1-6
ATLAS ERA TALES TO ASTONISH VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA TALES OF SUSPENSE VOLS. 1-4
ATLAS ERA VENUS VOL. 1

THE ATLAS ERA

Seeing super heroes waning, Timely Comics evolved into Atlas Comics and took on a vast new range of genres: science-fiction tales of outer space adventures and unimaginable monsters; realistic war comics; buxom jungle heroines; horror comics that would become the center of a moral panic that rocked the industry; and romance comics for the emerging teen audience. Even the classic costumed heroes of the '40s retooled to take on the threat of Communism. From Western gunfighters to crime to horror, Atlas had it all!

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